RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

For Everybody

FEB.

25¢ Canada 30¢

"I Remember When ---"

A gripping novelette of Railroading in the snow country by

Victor Maxwell

I Turned To Ice When I Tried To Talk

—But Now I Can Sway An Audience of Thousands!

I HAD always been painfully bashful. When trying to carry on even the most commonplace conversation my voice would sound unnatural and my hands and knees would tremble. Often I would listen to an argument among a group and become so keenly interested that I would want to voice my own opinion—yet timidity would keep me silent. I never had the courage to stand up for what I knew to be my rights—I was always afraid of "what people would say," of ridicule. Since my childhood I had had a secret desire to appear in public—to be active in politics—but my shyness was so great that I turned to ice when I tried to talk—in even the smallest gathering!

My inability to talk was also affecting my business success. I dreaded going in and asking for a raise—I was afraid of any situation that meant using my voice—having to express myself. I didn't know how to present the ideas which I was sure the firm could use. I was just a plodder—a truck horse, capable of doing a lot of heavy work but of no use where brilliant performance was required. Often I would see men who were not half so thorough nor so hard working as I, promoted to positions where they made a brilliant showing—not through hard work, but through their ability to talk cleverly and convincingly—to give the appearance of being efficient and skillful.

What 20 Minutes a Day Will Show You

- How to talk before your club or lodge
- How to propose and respond to toasts
- How to address board meetings
- How to tell entertaining stories
- How to make a political speech
- How to make after-dinner speeches
- How to converse interestingly
- How to write letters
- How to sell more goods
- How to train your memory
- How to enlarge your vocabulary
- How to develop self-confidence
- How to acquire a winning personality
- How to strengthen your will-power and ambition
- How to become a clear, accurate thinker
- How to develop your power of concentration
- How to become master of any situation

In Twenty Minutes a Day

And then suddenly I discovered a new easy method which made me a forceful speaker almost over night. I learned how to dominate one man or an audience of thousands—how to say just the right words at the right time, how to win and hold the attention of those around me, how to express my thoughts simply and clearly, yet in a pleasing, interesting and amusing way. In just a few months I was able to make campaign speeches for a local candidate—I who a short time before had turned to ice when I tried to carry on an ordinary conversation!

Soon I had won salary increases, promotion, popularity, power. Today I always have a ready flow of speech at my command. I am able to rise to any occasion, to meet any emergency with just the right words, to approach all types of people with ease and fearlessness. And I accomplished all this by developing the natural power of speech possessed by everyone, but cultivated by so few—by simply spending 20 minutes a day in my own home on this most fascinating subject.

Send for This Amazing Book

This new method of training is fully described in a very interesting and informative booklet which is now being sent to everyone mailing the coupon below. This book is called, *How To Work Wonders With Words*. In it you are shown how to conquer stage fright, self-consciousness, timidity, bashfulness and fear—those things that keep you silent while men of lesser ability get what they want by the sheer power of convincing speech. Not only men who have made millions, but thousands have sent for this book—and are unstinting in their praise of it. You are told how to bring out and develop your priceless "hidden knack"—the natural gift within you—which will win for you advancement in position and salary, popularity, social standing, power and real success. You can obtain your copy absolutely free by sending the coupon.

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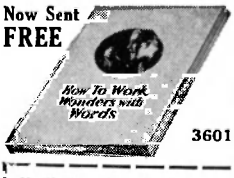

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Muscles 5¢ apiece!

WOULDN'T it be great if we could buy muscles by the bag—take them home and paste them on our shoulders? Then our rich friends with money to buy them, sure would be socking us all over the lots. But they don't come that easy, fellows. If you want muscle you have to work for it. That's the reason why the lazy fellow never can hope to be strong. So if you're lazy and don't want to work—you had better quit right here. This talk was never meant for you.

I Want Live Ones

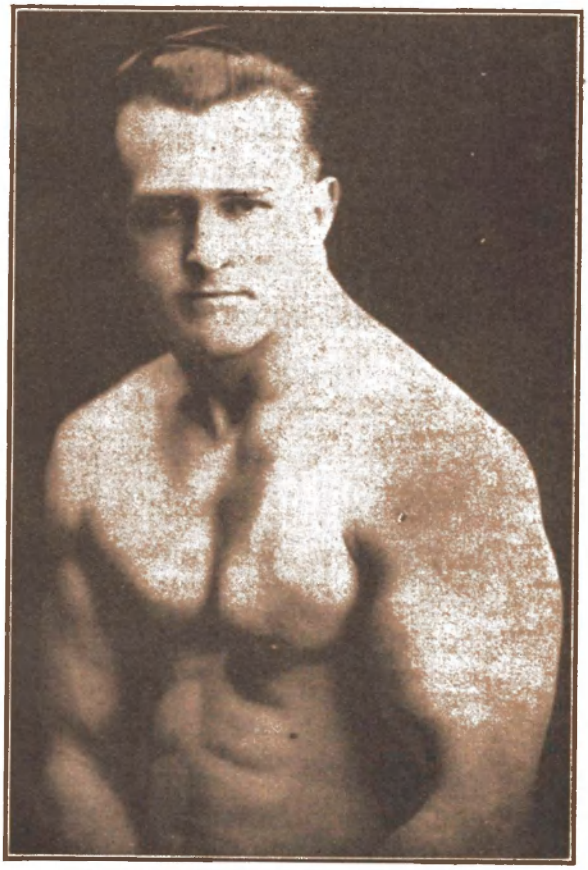
I've been making big men out of little ones for over fifteen years. I've made pretty near as many strong men as Heinz has made pickles. My system never fails. That's why I guarantee my works to do the trick. That's why they gave me the name of "The Muscle Builder."

I have the surest bet that you ever heard of. Eugen Sandow himself said that my system is the shortest and surest that America ever had to offer.

Follow me closely now and I'll tell you a few things I'm going to do for you.

Here's What I Guarantee

In just 30 days I'm going to increase your arm one full inch. Yes, and add two inches to your chest in the same length of time. But that's nothing. I've only started; get this—I'm going to put knobs of muscles on your shoulders like baseballs. I'm going to deepen your chest so that you will double your lung capacity. Each breath you take will flood every crevice of your pulmonary cavity with oxygen. This will load your blood with red corpuscles, shooting life and vitality throughout your entire system. I'm going to give you arms and legs like pillars. I'm going to work on every inner muscle as well, toning up your liver, your heart, etc. You'll have a snap to your step and a flash to your eye. You'll feel the real pep shooting up and down your old backbone. You'll stretch out your big brawny arms and crave for a chance to crush everything before you. You'll just bubble over with vim and animation.



EARLE LIEDERMAN, The Muscle Builder

Author of "Muscle Building," "Science of Wrestling and Jiu Jitsu," "Secrets of Strength," "Here's Health," "Endurance," Etc.

Sounds pretty good, what? You can bet your old ukulele it's good. It's wonderful. And don't forget, fellow—I'm not just promising all this—I guarantee it. Well, let's get busy, I want action—So do you.

SEND FOR MY NEW 64-PAGE BOOK "Muscular Development" **IT IS FREE**

It contains forty-eight full-page photographs of myself and some of the many prize-winning pupils I have trained. Some of these came to me as pitiful weaklings, imploring me to help them. Look them over now and you will marvel at their present physiques. This book will prove an impetus and a real inspiration to you. It will thrill you through and through. This will not obligate you at all, but for the sake of your future health and happiness do not put it off. Send today—right now before you turn this page.

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Dear Sir:—Please send me without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

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Street.....

City.....State.....

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Features

Novelette and Short Stories

Serials

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A Magazine For Everybody

February, 1930 Vol. I—No. 3

WHO'S WHO IN THE CREW

Charles Frederick Carter, author of "Making the Trains Behave," was born in northeastern Iowa some time ago. Finding school-teaching too tame, he tried braking on a new railroad on the western fringe of the corn belt. This proved too exciting in those old link and pin days so Carter turned to newspaper work.

After fourteen years in various editorial positions, in Chicago and New York, he became a free-lance magazine writer, in which capacity he specialized in railroads. He is the author of "When Railroads Were New," the only comprehensive early history of railroad beginnings extant. Finally he found a position in the department of public relations of the New York Central Lines, the most satisfactory vantage point from which to write.

C. F. CARTER

Home port . . .

Sirs—whether you flit homeward through the air or return by the double rail—what's the first thing you demand at a long journey's end?

Ten to one, once you've saluted your wife, you'll prove you are incurably American: you'll retire post-haste to an Ivory bath.

Yes, a deep-standing bath that steeps your soul with content, that coaxes nerves into quiet and smoothes your muscles into silken skeins. And when you are ready to remind yourself of your travel-stained pores, there's Ivory atop a nearby ripple. In double-quick time, you'll be encased in a rich toga of Ivory foam that would be the envy of a Caesar. But after one splash, you'll be as blithely untailored as Adam!

Ivory baths make lambs of bank presidents. For Ivory treats them as gently as if they were new depositors. It has soothed the most fastidious skins since 1879 and it has never let a bath-companion down. To its last sliver, it floats!

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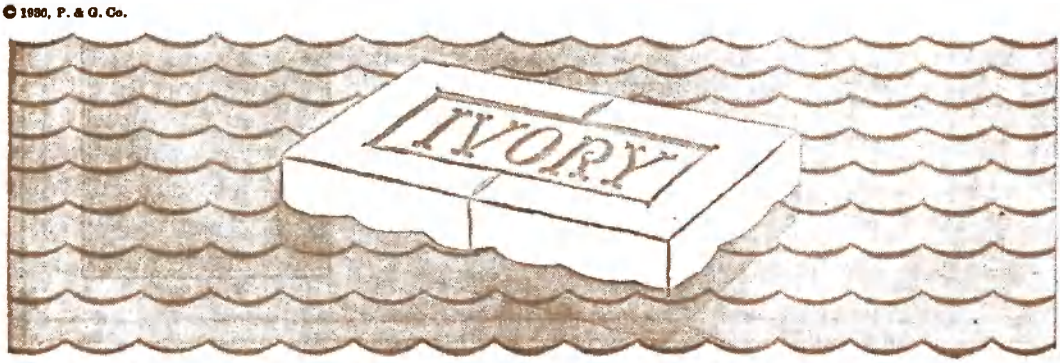

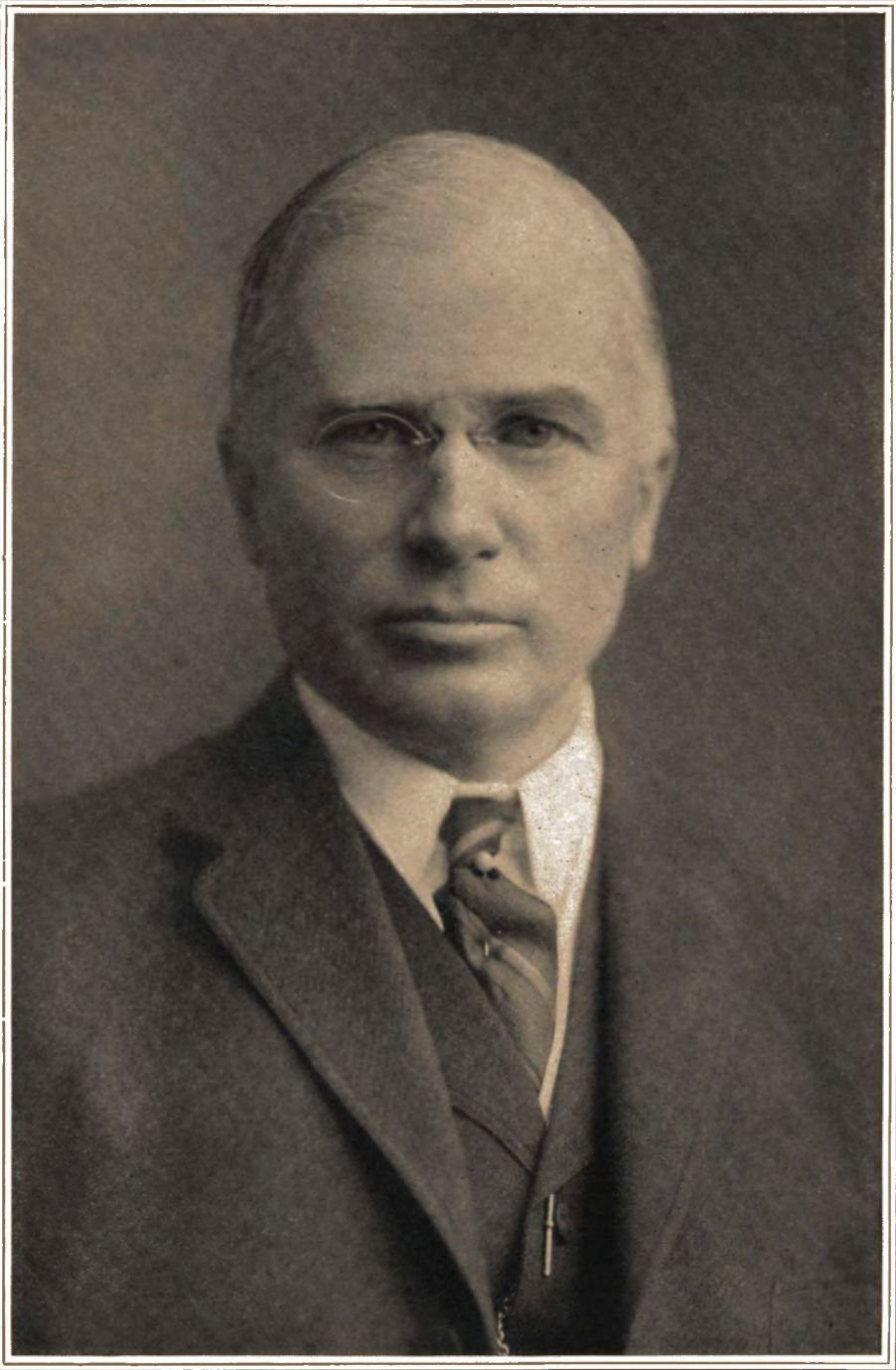

DANIEL WILLARD

President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

RAILROAD
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FEBRUARY, 1930

Chief of the B. & O.

Daniel Willard Pounded Ballast on the Central Vermont, Fired for the Connecticut and Passumpsic, Studied Men and Railroads and Saved a Great System

By Edward Hungerford

A WOMAN, slight and not overly strong, struggled with a heavy suitcase up the long stairs of a railroad station in Baltimore, not long ago. Two small children tugged impatiently at her skirts and added to her problems. At that moment, no red-capped porter was in sight. Suddenly she was conscious of a man walking beside her, reaching for her burden.

"Do let me help you, madam," he said, and suited action to his impulse.

A moment later a redcap espied the little party. The suitcase was shifted to the competent hands of the porter. The man, he was slightly past middle age, lifted his hat and walked off. The porter spoke to the woman.

"Do you know who that was?" said he, excitedly. Then answered his own question. "That was the president of our railroad."

The man was Daniel Willard and the railroad was the Baltimore and Ohio. To Willard and the many thousands of other men working for it, it is *our* railroad. All the time.

Sooner or later, most railroads begin to reflect the personality of the men who head them. To an extent, this is true of almost any business. This seems to be particularly true of railroads. Great organisms that they are, they are, in many ways, curiously sensitive; chameleon-like, they begin to take upon themselves the color of their head and front. Daniel Willard and the Baltimore and Ohio are full enough proof of this theory.

The Old Baltimore and Ohio

TIME was—and that time, some two decades past — when Baltimore and Ohio was something of a laughing stock and a reproach. In the company

of railroads it held no distinguished place. For years it had been batted about from pillar to post. From the expansive and far-seeing administration of its first really capable president, John W. Garrett, it had walked through valleys of deep shadows. Finally came the humility of receivership—fortunately a receivership in which the road lost neither its name nor its famous charter—and when that had been cleared successfully, there followed control by a not particularly sympathetic rival. Six or seven more years of comparative desuetude and then—Daniel Willard.

When Willard first walked into the president's office of the ancient company—the only railroad in this world to run continuously more than a hundred years without change of name, charter, or organization — a real job confronted him. He was no stranger to the property. A few years before and he had served a term as its assistant general manager. It was said of him that in those days he literally had walked the tracks of the system, hundreds of miles of them, in his desire to perfect his knowledge of the road and its needs.

Then Fate had carried him away from the Baltimore and Ohio. He went with his old chief and good friend, Frederick D. Underwood, who had been elected president of the Erie, to become a vice president of that road.

A little later, Willard became vice president of the powerful Burlington. He was now in a preëminently good house. The rich, complacent Burlington. The dynasty of James J. Hill. He could afford to sit back and purr. Except that Daniel Willard has never had the habit of sitting back or purring.

Baltimore and Ohio needed a president and Daniel Willard was the man it needed as its president. It called him—in the last days of 1909—and he accepted the call. Mr. Hill was perturbed by the entire business. He made no bones of that. He whispered in Willard's ear of a coming presidency up there in the Northwest. But Willard shook his head. He had made up his mind. His lot was to be cast in Baltimore, not in Chicago or in St. Paul.

"Very well, Dan," said Mr. Hill. "Your desk will be waiting for you here when you are ready to come back."

It may still be waiting there.

Now for a quick comparison.

The Baltimore and Ohio of 1909—two jumps ahead of the sheriff and a lot of jumps back of its more prosperous competitors. The Baltimore and Ohio of 1930—a well-seasoned, well-equipped and a steadily prosperous property, recognized by even the sharpest of its competitors as one of the key railroads of this land. None of the many railroad consolidation schemes that have come forward have even hinted at the absorption of Baltimore and Ohio. Every one of them has recognized it as a road that is to do a considerable amount of absorbing on its own account, a railroad system, whose greatest future, even after one hundred and three years of existence, is still forging ahead.

The record of these twenty years is the record of Daniel Willard; of Willard and his fellows, for no man is more quick to place the major part of the credit for this remarkable transformation upon the shoulders of those who have worked beside him and with him than is the president of Baltimore and Ohio. As these paragraphs are

being written, preparations are under way for a dinner in Baltimore to mark the twentieth anniversary of Mr. Willard's assumption of the presidency of the road. There will be many men, and distinguished ones, to speak his praises. But when it comes his own turn to speak, he will modestly place the credit of the achievement upon others. For this is his way—and it always will be.

This dinner is being given, not by the directors and the stockholders of his company, not by his fellow railroad presidents, not by the citizens of Baltimore, but by the organized labor that works for the road. That is the most remarkable feature of the tribute. These men who work with Willard for the upbuilding of a single American railroad *know* where the credit for its regeneration belongs. And yet even they do not know what their chief has given, of himself, to the property. They do not know of the heartaches and the rebuffs. They may not remember all the first years of steadily cleaning up the underbrush of neglect, of the careful planning and upbuildings, and then, in the dour black of three awful April days in 1913, the Ohio floods and the wiping out of human lives and millions of dollars' worth of railroad property. Of the big boss, like a general, living at the front, helping here, helping there, never despairing, outwardly at least, but patiently planning to again replace the living, breathing organism of a railroad.

The days of 1918 and those that followed were, if anything, worse for Baltimore and Ohio than those of the Ohio floods. Government overlordship did the road no good. Its morale and its traffic and physical property alike were exposed to great injuries. Willard, himself, was removed from the active control of the road.

A Real President's Job

When the cycle of time brought Baltimore and Ohio back to its rightful owners once again, Daniel Willard took off his coat and went to work, once more to attempt the rehabilitation of the property he headed. Even then he was not out of the woods. Baltimore and Ohio, like many of its fellows, was at that time engaged in the settlement of serious labor disputes in its shops. The entire situation was most damaging to the effort to reëstablish the morale of the road.

But Willard met the situation; solved it. He solved it through cooperation and the spirit of entire fairness. The famous Baltimore and Ohio shop plan was evolved. The workers in all of the road's shops finally were imbued with a sense of interest and enthusiasm even in the present and in the future of the property. They are to-day among the chief rooters for it. Otherwise this dinner at Baltimore to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the " big chief's " accession to the control of the road would never have been given.

The physical rehabilitation of the property was a little easier. It involved chiefly the raising of funds and the intelligent spending of them. But even this took time, and it was not until 1925 that Baltimore and Ohio, physically, was back to the point where it had been when taken over by the Federal government at the end of 1918. Since then its progress has continued steadily forward. For the first time in the history of the road all-Pullman passenger trains have been installed; between New York, Baltimore and

Washington and Chicago and St. Louis. While these were not the fastest trains in the land, they were quite swift enough. And they gave to none other in the comfort and in the luxury of their equipment.

But the thing that the president of Baltimore and Ohio has stressed all the while is not speed, but safety and punctuality. He likes to advertise the remarkably regular "on time" records of these two chief trains of the line. And despite the fact that Baltimore and Ohio has a fine fast train to-day doing the 225 miles between Washington and Jersey City in four hours and twenty-eight minutes, its president still looks askance at swift running. Once, when a northbound train that carried him up from Baltimore was making, with its remarkable new motive-power, upwards of seventy-five miles an hour, the president, glancing at the speedometer in the corner of his car, sent a telegram back to his operating vice president asking why on earth the strict rule of the company about no train exceeding sixty-five miles an hour at any time was being violated.

These questions of Willard's at times come thick and fast. His keen eye is out of the window much of the time when he is out upon the line, and he is out on the line a very great deal: Why has not that station at R— been repainted? Two window panes are broken at Tower EZ. Why have they not been replaced? A lot of rubbish on the right of way just beyond Harpers Ferry. Why? Uncle Daniel is mighty fussy about the policing of his line. New England born, he has a tremendous interest in the neat and tidy appearance of a railroad, every mile of it. He had infinitely rather have a clean old station than an untidy and pretentious new one. Baltimore and Ohio, its entire length, shows this meticulous demand on the part of its president.

Fond of great problems, he is never above the little things.

"I have never known a railroad president who so envies the rear brakeman his job," one of his closest friends said to me some time ago.

That was not quite fair. And yet there was truth in it. It is this man's honest passion for necessary detail that has done much to make the Baltimore and Ohio what it is to-day.

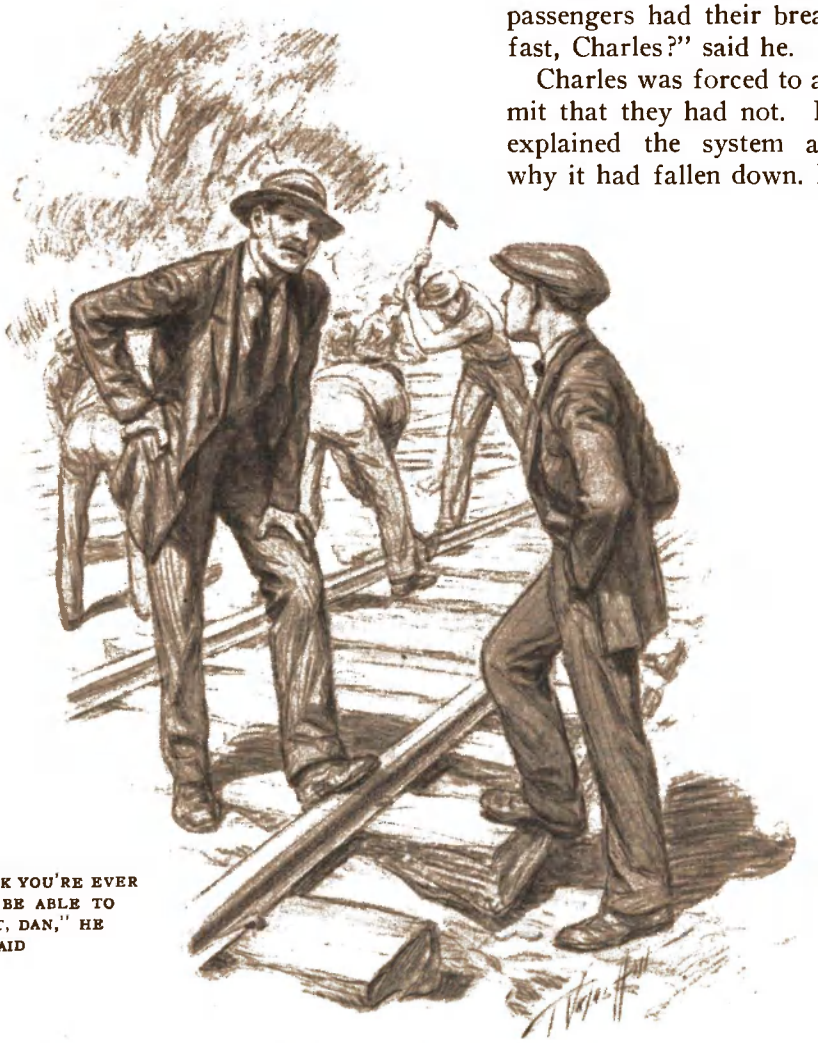
Take the single factor of its dining-cars. It is generally conceded by wise old travelers that it is this one feature that has done the most to upbuild the road's passenger service. There is not a detail of that service that is not familiar to the president of Baltimore and Ohio.

It is he who has set the quality of the corn meal for the cakes; and of the maple sirup that surmounts them. He has been known to spend an entire day driving through the Vermont hills picking out just the right quality of that sirup. When Willard's car is affixed to the rear end of the road's through trains, he has a way of sending forward to the dining-car for samples of this dish or of that; never announced in advance. Judgment on the food sample is then pronounced by the folk at the president's table. If it be highly favorable a present from the big chief goes to the chef of that particular traveling kitchen; sometimes a signed and framed photograph of the president himself.

Much of the time Willard spends in that comfortable old-fashioned car of his, riding the line of the Baltimore and Ohio, keeping his eyes open, asking questions, meeting the patrons and

the employees of the line. Asked how much of his time he spent out on the road, once, he replied, rather casually:

"Oh, I don't know, perhaps three or four days out of each week."



"DON'T THINK YOU'RE EVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO STAND IT, DAN," HE SAID

Once when he was on one of these frequent expeditions his car was hitched to the rear of an express on one of the road's side lines. The train bore a through sleeper or two from Chicago. At a certain Ohio town it was supposed to pick up a diner for breakfast—at 8.30 o'clock or thereabouts. On this one occasion the train was breaking Baltimore and Ohio profits by being an hour or so behind time. The president began asking questions of his secretary.

"Have all these through passengers had their breakfast, Charles?" said he.

Charles was forced to admit that they had not. He explained the system and why it had fallen down. By attaching the breakfast car at Newark, the services of a whole car up and down a line of comparatively light travel were saved. Operating economy in that!

"But they should not be saved, at the expense of our patrons," protested

Daniel Willard. And the next day, and every day thereafter, there were two cars assigned to the run, so that early breakfast would be ready on that train. And on that day all the through passengers on the train — there were twenty-two of them—had a fine hot breakfast as the guest of the president of the road. His car always is stocked for emergencies just like this.

A Temporary Setback

TIME was when Daniel Willard had no car of his own. His railroad training began almost at the very beginning of things—tamping ties upon the track of the old Vermont Central. Vermont born, he had expected to enter other fields of life. Born on a farm, agriculture had made the first appeal to him. So that he might be the best kind of a farmer that was possible for him to become, he had entered the Massachusetts Agricultural College at Amherst. His eyes bothered him greatly there—the opticians of that day had not learned to relieve astigmatism by the use of corrective lenses—and, reluctantly, he was compelled to leave the college. He turned to the railroad, its outdoor life appealed to him at that particular moment when the upbuilding of his health was of great consequence. He found a place with the track gang of the Central Vermont; up at Windsor, near where he was born. The foreman took him on reluctantly.

"Don't think you're ever going to be able to stand it, Dan," he said frankly.

But Dan did stand it. He stood it for a year or more, and then, suddenly, his ambition came to work in the cab of a locomotive. He quit the track gang.

"I hate to have ye go, Dan," said the foreman. "I honestly don't know how I'm going to get on without ye. An' that's the first time I ever said that o' any man."

The Connecticut and Passumpsic Railroad gained a fireman. And when times were slow and in the dead of a New England winter, Willard's engine was laid for a time, the young fireman ran the engine of a pumping station at the shore of a Vermont lake. The hours were long and the job not exacting.

Then it was that he first formed the habit of steady reading that has stood by him all of these years. He is the most inveterate reader that I know. And one of the most intelligent. Almost every day there comes to his desk one or more of the newest books, on science, economics, biography, history or the like. Each day time is set aside for reading. Even when he is out on the line in his car, and the day's work runs from seven in the morning until ten or eleven at night, there is an hour at the end of all set aside for the mental recreation that comes from the perusal of a really good book.

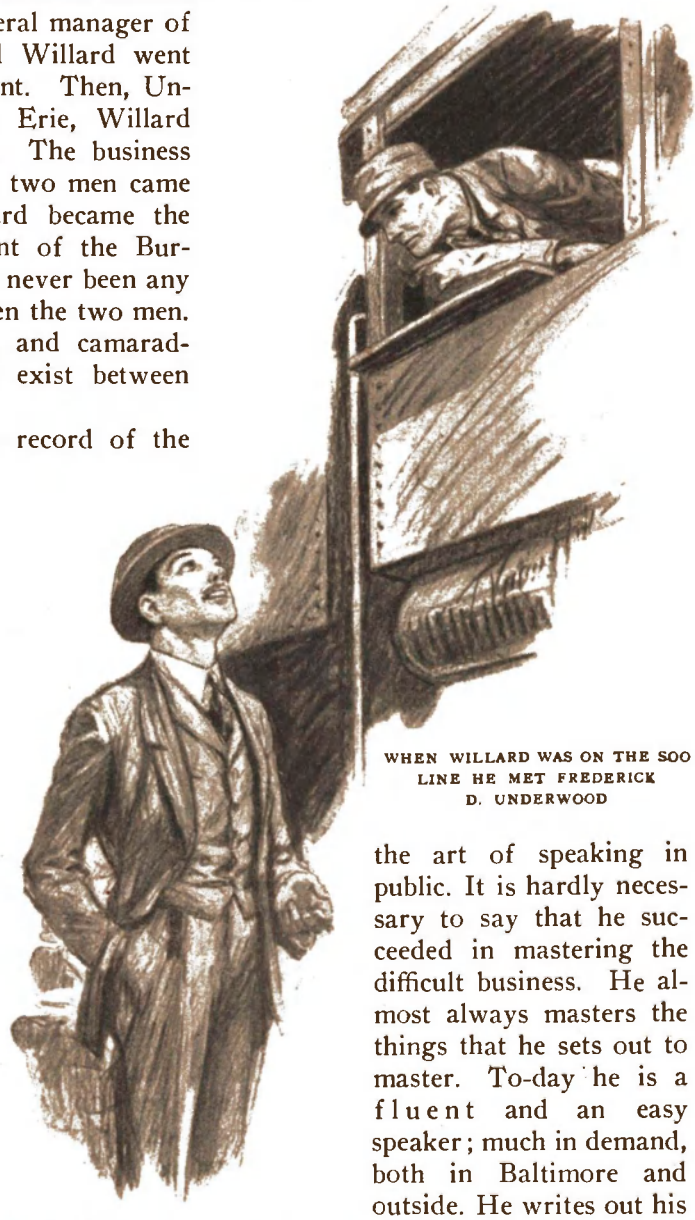
From the Connecticut and Passumpsic Railroad, Daniel Willard drifted, after the fashion of many railroaders, out into the middle portion of the country. He fired an engine and then drove one on the old Lake Shore road. He went further west, this time up into the bleak northwest. He was first an engineer and then a minor officer of the Soo Line. Here it was that he made that friendship that was to stay with him many years.

That veteran and seasoned railroader, Frederick D. Underwood, was general manager of the Soo when Willard first went to work for it. Underwood

has an uncanny way of forming correct judgments on men. From the first he liked Daniel Willard. Together the men rose. Underwood went to the Baltimore and Ohio to become vice president and general manager of that property. Daniel Willard went with him as an assistant. Then, Underwood went to the Erie, Willard went along with him. The business separation between the two men came when, in 1904, Willard became the operating vice president of the Burlington. But there has never been any other separation between the two men. The closest friendship and camaradarie has continued to exist between them.

Such is, briefly, the record of the rise of this outstanding president of Baltimore and Ohio. This rise did not cease when he assumed his present post. Within its broad scope the man has continued to progress admirably. One point alone will illustrate:

When Willard first went to Baltimore he was diffident to an extreme. Above all things he hated public speaking; when he, himself, had to be the speaker. He avoided it whenever it was possible and when he had to make a speech it was not a good speech. Even his warmest friends were forced to admit that. But gradually the president of Baltimore and Ohio found that there were occasions when it became extremely necessary for the president of Baltimore and Ohio to make a speech, and it must be a good speech, always. He put himself to mastering



WHEN WILLARD WAS ON THE SOO LINE HE MET FREDERICK D. UNDERWOOD

the art of speaking in public. It is hardly necessary to say that he succeeded in mastering the difficult business. He almost always masters the things that he sets out to master. To-day he is a fluent and an easy speaker; much in demand, both in Baltimore and outside. He writes out his speeches with meticulous care, but he never reads them from a manuscript. In the preparation of an address he manages so to memorize it that he de-

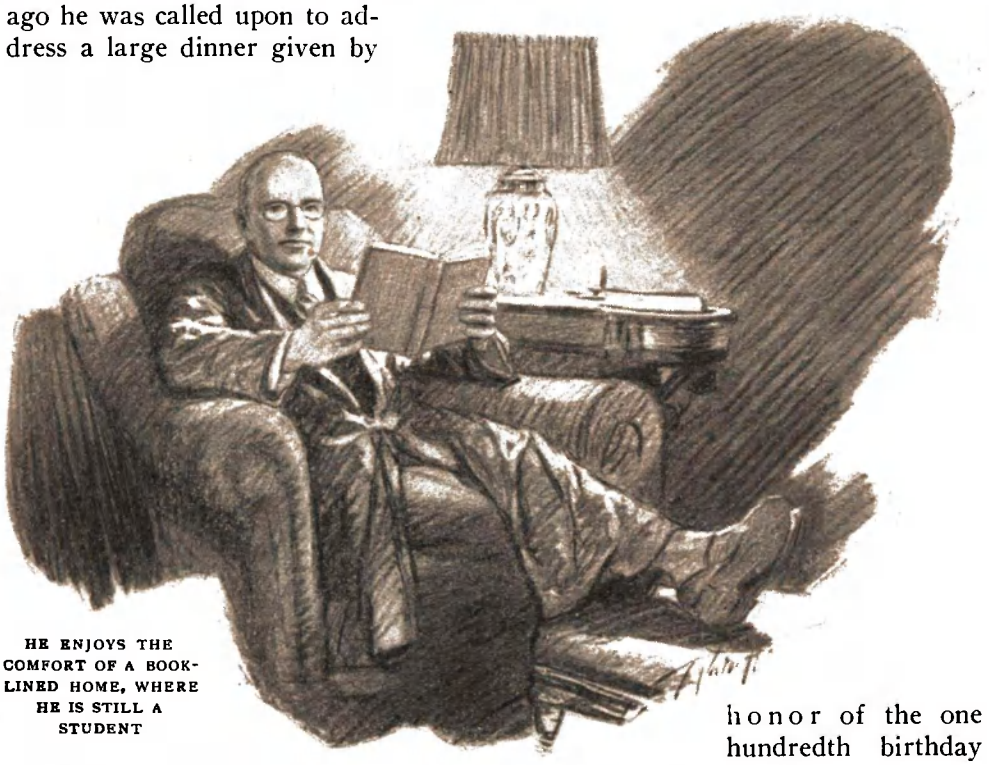
livers it without the slightest hesitation and with little or no deviation from the written manuscript.

Willard speaks to the point. He is concise, and he is direct. Moreover he is possessed of quite a rare sense of humor. Upon a certain occasion in Baltimore two or three years ago he was called upon to address a large dinner given by the local Democrats in honor of the distinguished Governor of Maryland. He rose slowly from his seat, cleared his throat and began, something after this fashion:

"I really do not know why I am asked to speak here to-night. While I have many friends among the Democrats, it so happens that I am not one myself. But if it will make you gentlemen feel any better, I will say that my father up in Vermont was a Democrat. All his life, with one exception, he voted the Democratic ticket. The one exception was the time that he voted for a winning ticket."

That caught the house.

Perhaps the most important address that Willard ever made was at the dinner given by the Baltimore and Ohio at Baltimore in February, 1927, in honor of the one hundredth birthday of the company. About him were gathered a thousand or more of the most distinguished citizens of the city and of the land: railroad presidents, railroad workers, labor leaders, bankers, merchants, manufacturers. Many had come to do homage to the man quite as much as to the railroad. While not billed as the chief speaker—that honor was reserved for Newton D. Baker, a director of the Baltimore and Ohio Company—he was, none the less, easily the central figure of the occasion. He might have been forgiven fairly



HE ENJOYS THE COMFORT OF A BOOK-LINED HOME, WHERE HE IS STILL A STUDENT

extended remarks—the gods were fairly sitting within the palms of his two hands. At the appointed moment he arose, tapped a locomotive bell standing near by for attention, and spoke—for just six minutes. That was all. Willard is not one of these speakers, fond of the sound of his own voice. He says what he has to say; to the point and quickly always.

A Job Well Done

EACH morning that he is in Baltimore he comes to his office promptly at nine.

His work is organized, and there are few times when he is not quickly accessible to chance callers. They may even find him engrossed for a half hour in one of those fine new books that forever are coming to his desk. At noon he gathers his staff around him, his vice presidents, his general counsel, traffic and operating managers in the private dining room that is attached to his office suite and luncheon is served; generous but simple.

At this round-table luncheon the talk is chiefly of the railroad—how the car loadings were last week, how many cars came over the mountain last night, the progress on the new passenger station up at P— all the rest of the news from the road.

Sometimes the group at the table is varied. For instance, on Mondays there is apt to be present two or three men from Johns Hopkins. For Willard's chief responsibilities to-day are dual. One day a week this super-busy man gives largely to the affairs of the great educational institution to which, as president of the board of trustees, he devotes so much of his time and boundless energy. It is not every railroad president that can find time to be the fiscal head of a great university as well.

On occasions there are newspaper men at the board. Willard himself is the chief publicity agent of Baltimore and Ohio, and he is a good one. He maintains personal contacts with most of the important writers, and woe be to that one of them who lets slip a misstatement of fact in regard to the Baltimore road. A courteous but decisive letter from its president will await his attention, almost in the next mail. Willard is not one of those men who permit things to go by, through default.

A quiet, clean-cut, directive life, this. Time was when Daniel Willard had the reputation of being something of a hard driver, a nervous, energetic executive, who believed in getting every last thing that was possible out of a man. The years have softened him a bit. He has become a little gentler, a little kindlier. But the years have not weakened him. Not the least little bit.

He contemplates with pride the workings of the road's remarkable contacts with the labor forces. He finds recreation in studying the curriculums and the problems of the university that he heads.

That is the day's work for Willard. When it is done there is the charm of a comfortable, book-lined home, a wife and children and grandchildren around about him. Home, he goes out but little of an evening. The theater occasionally gets him, but not often. But the comfort of the fireside, the companionship of a good book, perhaps for a moment the voice of the radio, bringing music across through the night. These are the main pleasures of a man whose greatest charm is his absolute simplicity.

THE CIRCUS READY TO UNLOAD

Railroading the Circus

A Great Showman Made Possible the "Greatest Show on Earth" by Jumping From Wagons to Rolling Stock

By John Wilstach

THIS is the story of the achievements of W. C. Coup, a pioneer showman unknown to fame. Yet he revolutionized the circus game. When he joined this game, the wagon, or "mud" show was a small, one ring affair, bravely going from town to town by horse power, unable to bridge the distance between large cities. Through his ideas and efforts the three-ring circus came into being and was first transported across the country by the railroad. Originally the ordinary railroad equipment was used; then, through Coup's insistence, special cars were built for the outfit. This was accomplished against the wishes of, and facing P. T. Barnum's opposition. Yet Barnum's renown has entirely obscured Coup's.

Yet the story of Coup is not the usual Alger success tale; it is too true to life to be that. It has all the ups and downs of a showman's existence, and the moral, if any, is that genius may not be joined to a talent for money making.

To give our hero his full name, William Cameron Coup, and to say that he was born in Mount Pleasant, Indiana, in 1837, is to start like all biographies. Coup's father ran a tavern in a small country town, and the boy served as a "devil" in a rural newspaper office. A small circus came to town, and he ran away with it, joining on in the humble capacity of a roustabout.

The general impression may be that the type of circus, known to the late sixties, was a sort of gypsy van kind

of thing. That was not the case. Even in those days Americans had shown a natural talent for organization. Nothing was done in a haphazard manner. So it might be interesting to study their transportation problem and how it was solved.

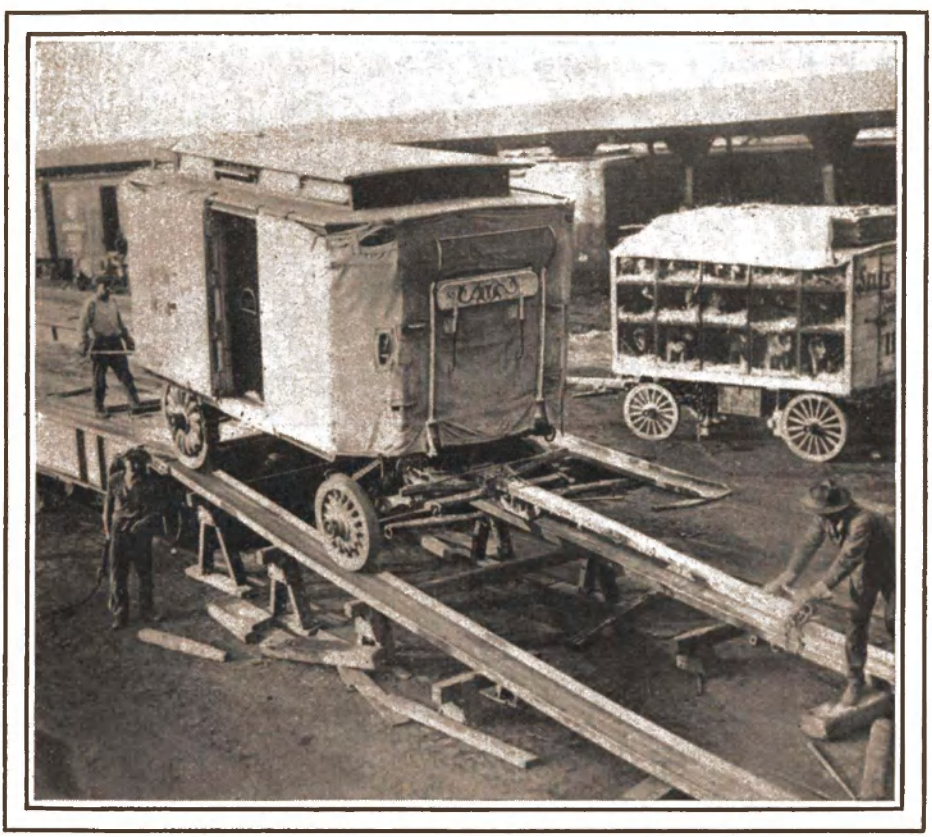
The show must be moved to the next stand by horse power, and so the jump was limited to thirty or forty miles. As a rule the caravan must be under way by midnight, since the roads, particularly in the spring, were often extremely bad.

In those days the show was generally over by ten o'clock, and the customers streamed down the midway by the light of rags on the ends of poles, dipped in turpentine, burning brightly, or pine pitch in metal containers casting a yellow flame.

After the customers left the lot, the work of tearing down tents started. They were wrapped in sections and placed on special wagons, along with side and center poles and stakes. The circus boarded and fed their employees, by contract, in the town played, but their chances at any real sleep during the season was very poor; often they fell off wagon seats during the night from sheer exhaustion.

The lines of wagons that comprised the mud show were divided into two parts, called "trains," each in charge of a boss hostler.

The first, called "the baggage train," carried all the equipment neces-



GETTING 'EM OUT OF THE YARDS

sary to erect the round top on the lot, including the long planks used as seats, properties, tackle, stakes, poles, and crews of canvasmen, razorbacks and roustabouts. This pulled out first, at the crack of the boss hostler's whip. Directions had been sent back to him by a layer-out, but it was not unusual for him to lose his train in the darkness, since his information was often not very comprehensive.

An hour after the baggage train had left, the second section, or "cage train," got under way. This was made up of the menagerie wagons, golden scrolled, band wagon, carts of various descriptions for the performers, and the teams with fast horses driven by the grifters with the outfit. The valuable ring stock trailed behind, and at the extreme end was the animal called upon in case of emergency, the elephant.

When a wagon became stuck in the mud, the cry of "Mile-Up" would go down the line, and the tusker brought forward to push it out of the mire.

THE ELEPHANTS BAT FOR THE "GOAT"

In case the boss hostler might become confused in the darkness, at a forking of the road, one was "railed," that is a long tree or stick was thrown across, meaning: "Take the other highway."

Or a piece of paper was left under a large rock, saying: "Turn to your left after crossing the next bridge, a landslide has put the other road out of commission."

Sometimes, during the long night, the caravan has halted a half dozen times for repairs, or to have the elephant pull a wagon out of the mire, when the word goes along that the outfit is "lost."

Before he died Mr. Coup related that the word lost, in this connection, was particularly harrowing.

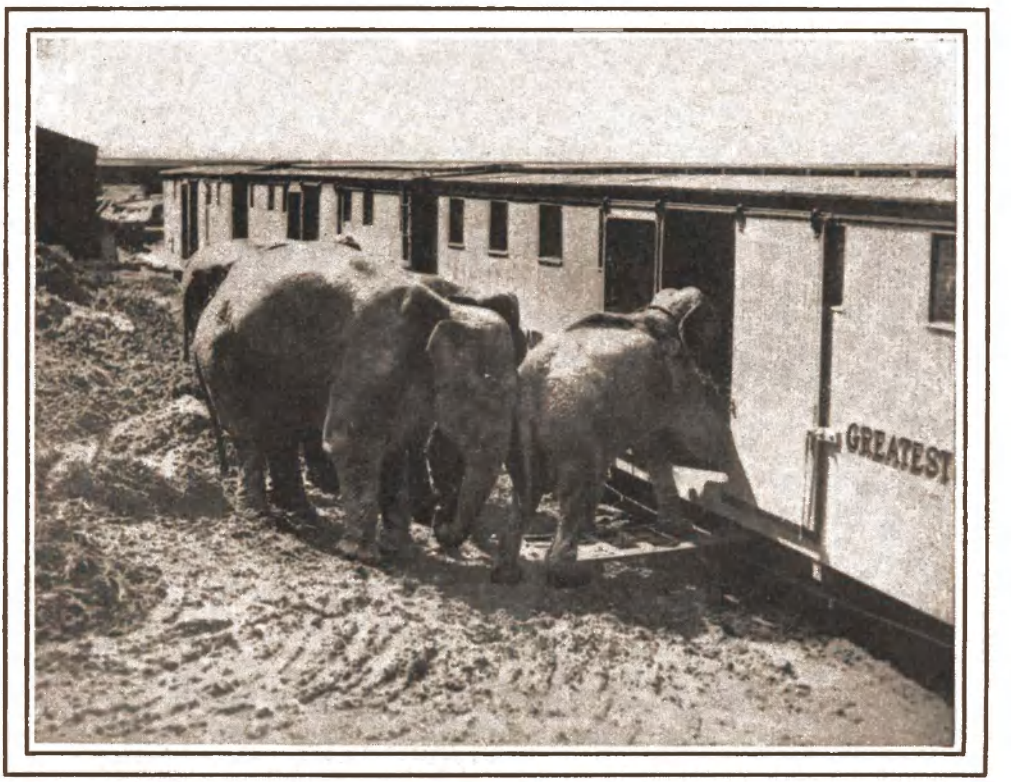
"It was bad enough," he said, "to have slept four hours out of the twenty-four, and to be crawling along at a snail's pace. Then it starts to rain pitchforks, under the orders of General Discomfort. Finding that the road has been lost is the last straw. It means retracing the way back to the forks of a road that maybe lies miles in the rear. Many an old showman has wished he were dead under such conditions.

"One night, with one of those early shows, when we had become lost in the darkness, I clambered up on top of a tent wagon, determined to get a little sleep come what may.

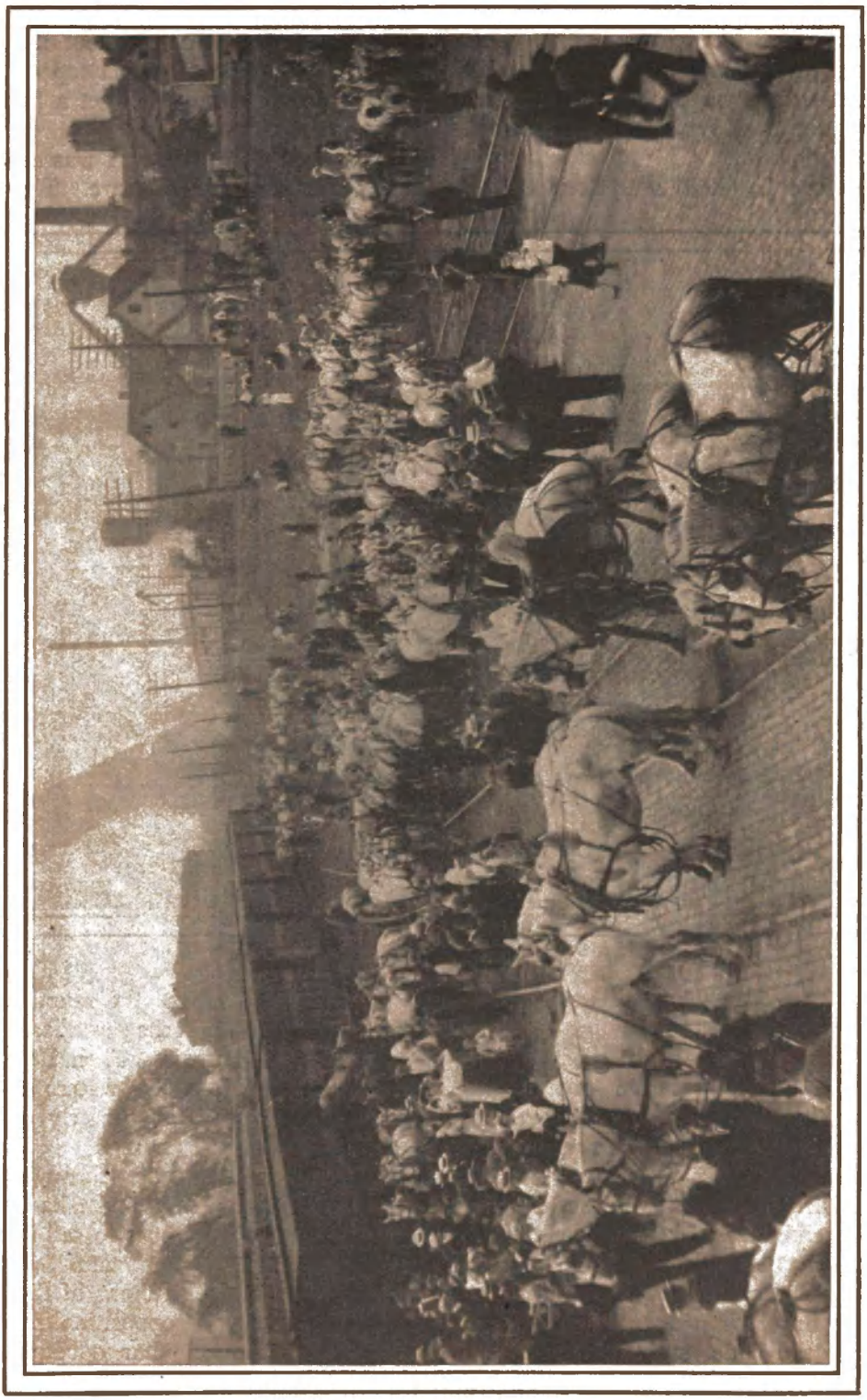
"The next thing I knew I was as if struggling out of a nightmare. There was a crash of timbers, the sound of frightened horses, and the sensation of falling through the air. Then I felt myself dropped into icy water; the heavy show wagon, fortunately for me, going one way, I another.

"The wagon had fallen through a bridge we were crossing, and I had to be one of the unlucky ones to fall into the waters of that little stream.

"My other bridge memory of those days was during an opposition fight between two shows. Our opponents



AT THE END OF A HARD DAY



TYPICAL PHOTO OF OLD DAYS OF UNLOADING THE CIRCUS AT ONE-DAY STANDS

burned a bridge at a certain point in Ohio where we were to cross, and it meant to us the loss of the next stand.

"Aside from fighting the weather and bad roads, during those trips in the night, we had the rough populace to deal with. They delighted in hiding on tall trees and taking pot shots at us in the dark.

"Once, in Missouri, the baggage train had passed along, followed by the cage train, with its band of valuable ring stock. There were a collection of about twenty-five horses and ponies of great value. One night, just before daybreak, the teamsters in charge of the ring stock were attacked by a band of robbers. They were overcome in the fight and left bruised and bound by the roadside, and the horses were galloped away.

"In the meantime the baggage train had reached the circus lot, put up the tent, and everybody wondered why the performers, menagerie, and ring stock hadn't yet come along. Show time arrived and the audience began to grow impatient. Suddenly a man rode up with the news that he had released some men who said they had been robbed of the show stock. A posse was formed to go after the horse thieves, but they were never overtaken. A shabby substitute of a show had to be given with ring acts eliminated. That was one of the many things shows traveling by road were up against."

The Greatest Show on Earth

AFTER serving a number of years with small circuses, Mr. Coup joined the E. F. & J. Mabie's Circus, obtaining the side show privileges. In 1866 he was with the Yankee Robinson Show, and by 1868 was the assistant manager.

In 1870 Mr. Coup had an inspiration, which he confided to Dan Costello, a showman of great experience. He would write P. T. Barnum, then in semi-retirement in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and get him interested in a mammoth circus, larger than anything that had yet been attempted. Barnum was sixty years old now, and did not feel inclined to putting together a great traveling attraction. But Coup, in writing him, worked upon his vanity and gained the desired result. The reply from the great showman was certainly encouraging.

Barnum's biography credits himself, of course, as being the inspiration of the Greatest Show on Earth. But after his association with the great P. T. Barnum had entirely ceased, Coup showed a letter that proved he had been inspired to produce the greatest of all circuses, using, naturally, Barnum's name as a drawing card.

The note from P. T. B. follows:

Bridgeport, Oct. 8, 1870.

MY DEAR COUP:

Yours received. I will join you in a show for next season and will probably have Admiral Dot well trained this winter and have him and Harrison in the show. Wood will sell all his animals outright, and will furnish several tip-top museum curiosities. You need to spend several months in New York arranging for curiosities, cuts, cages, bills, *et cetera*. All things got from Wood I will settle for with him and give the concern credit. We can make a stunning museum department. If you want to call it *my* museum and use my name it may be used by allowing me the same very small percentage that Wood allows for calling himself my successor —three per cent of receipts. You can have a Cardiff Giant that won't crack, also a moving figure, Sleeping Beauty, or Dying Zouave—a big Gymnastic figure like that in Wood's Museum, and lots of other good things, only you

need time to look them up and prepare wagons, *et cetera, et cetera.*

Yours truly,

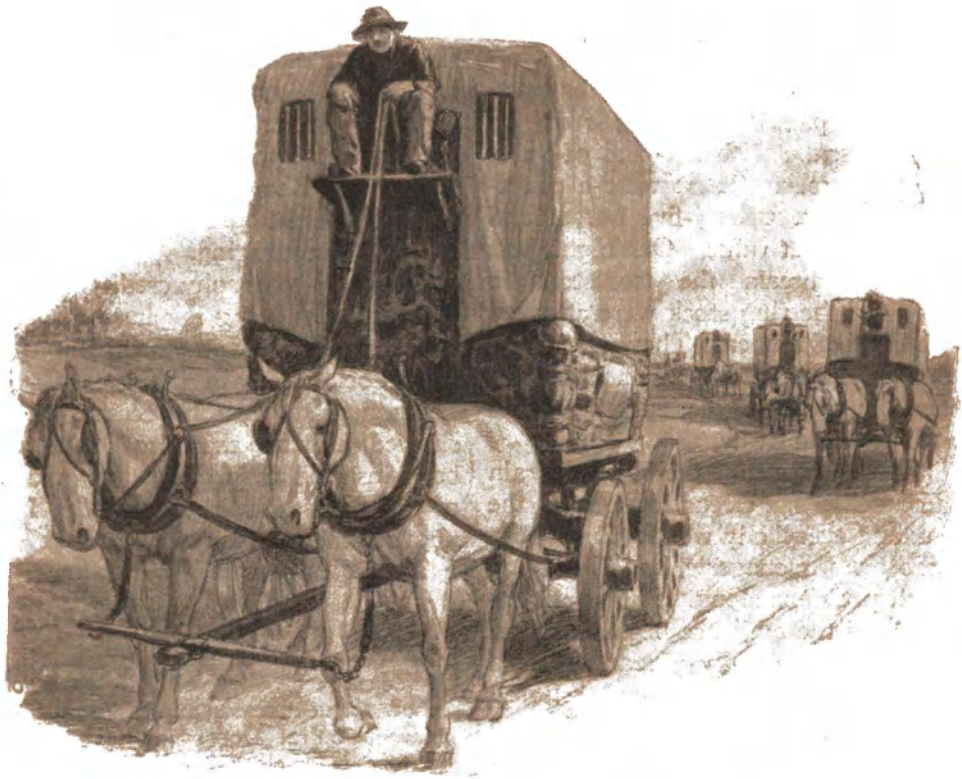
P. T. BARNUM.

P.S.—I will spare time to look up the show in New York when you come. I think Siamese Twins would pay.

Following the receipt of this letter, Coup came to New York, and as general director and manager, put together the greatest circus ever seen under the largest spread of canvas.

The show opened in Brooklyn, on April 10, 1871, and on the season broke all records to date for profit, making four hundred thousand dollars.

Previously, circuses had depended upon bill posting to draw trade. Besides having out advance brigades, Coup made arrangements with the leading railroads of New York and the New England States to run excursions, on the date played, from towns within a radius of seventy-five miles. Thus attendance possibilities were tremendously increased—and the railroad first enters the story—though the Greatest Show on Earth still traveled from town to town by wagons.



THE WAY THEY USED TO TRANSPORT "WORLD'S GREATEST"

The success of the season was, indeed, enormous. The year 1871 was a peak point. But Coup was not satisfied. He put his finger unerringly on the disadvantage of wagon show transportation. It was impossible to go from one large town to another. Showing in towns of all sizes, the receipts varied from one thousand to seven thousand dollars daily, but intake in the larger places was often

three or four times as much as in the smaller.

Coup Secures Railroad Transportation

So Coup became convinced that he could at least double the receipts if he could ignore the lesser points and travel only from one large city to another by railroad, drawing upon the surrounding territory instead of being obliged to play in it.

Instead of taking Barnum into his confidence, he went out to see how the idea might be received by the railroad people, who must move the circus once it was placed upon the rails.

The idea was there, but how would the railroads take to the suggestion that they deliver his show to various towns at a particular hour — make a special schedule?

Coup wired several superintendents, asking if they could accommodate him, with the information that he must land in town as early as 6 A.M. It must be remembered that in those times Barnum's great attraction gave three performances daily. Some of the replies that came back weren't encouraging.

One said, "Cannot furnish switch room."

Another said, "Give more particulars."

After further correspondence failed to get anywhere, Coup went to Philadelphia, where he interviewed officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was voted the most persistent man in his beliefs they'd ever seen, and Coup was told he would be paid to leave them in peace.

Finally it was agreed to give the idea of putting the circus on the rails a trial, and New Brunswick, New Jersey, fixed upon as the first loaded place. Sixty-one cars were contracted for. Loading started at 8 P.M., and wasn't finished until 8 A.M. the next morning. Fortunately the run to the next stand was not a long one.

Before and during this operation P. T. Barnum insisted that he abandon the innovation, but Coup insisted upon going through with it.

The first difficulty met with was that scarcely two of the cars were of uniform height. The flat and freight cars were only thirty feet in length, the coaches forty. The heavy wagons were pushed on "runs," and taken from one car to another across heavy planks; they frequently crashed through the rotten boards composing the bed of the car.

Coup realized that he must have iron extensions reaching from one car to another. During that first week it happened twice that the yardmaster ordered the circus crews to load one car at a time, then switch it away, and start on another. At this rate, of course, it would have taken twenty-four hours to get the show entirely stowed away.

Late in life Coup declared that during that first week of loading and unloading he never took his clothes off his back from the first day until the show reached Philadelphia. He had been aided during all this time by heads of railroad departments, untiring in their desire to put this new style of circus transportation across.

Special Cars for the Show

ONE thing became clear to Barnum's general manager. He must have a train of cars built for special show purposes. At a shop in Columbus, Ohio, he made a contract with a car builder, who turned out an order in thirty days of cars of uniform height, with the desired iron extensions running from car to car.

At Cleveland he bought a number of so-called "palace horse cars," used to carry race horses, and the Pullman people furnished sleepers for the artists and working crews.

Now he had box cars for the extra stuff, palace cars for the horses and other large animals; "platform" cars for wagons, chariots, cages and carriages; and the Herculean task of making the "first railroad show" a success was accomplished. These were also the first cars ever owned by a circus.

In old invoices that have been preserved of W. C. Coup's are some figures of prices he paid for railroad stock. They are interesting, as of the date, 1871, in comparison with what equipment costs to-day:

2 advertising cars $5,000
(Note: These were elaborate, with sleeping quarters for a crew of bill posters, used for a billing campaign some weeks in advance of a play date.)
2 sleepers $5,000
10 Flat cars at $400 ..... $4,000
6 Horse cars at $400..... $2,400
Elephant's car $500

After the railroad show had proved a triumph, with the added advertising of enormous crowds that came to watch the loading and unloading, Barnum sometimes traveled with the show, but usually refused to sleep in the same car with Coup, giving as a reason that should both of them be killed the show would be without a head.

In the course of one trip the two showmen were compelled to be in the same sleeper; it caught fire and was very nearly destroyed, but the accident took place in the daytime and no one was injured.

During that first season on the rails several accidents occurred to mar the even tenor of success.

Coup was riding in the cab of the locomotive, for experience, when the train pulled out of Indiana, Pennsylvania. This station is on one of the small branches of the Pennsylvania Railroad, high on the mountain, the grade exceedingly heavy.

During the trip, when the speed became excessive, the engineer whistled hard for "down brakes." The brakes refused to work, and the train sped on at a frightful speed.

The engine shook and rattled, and several times seemed on the point of toppling over. Coup held on by the window ledge for dear life, thinking of the cars behind him loaded down with horses, animals, elephants, camels and human beings. Above the roar and rattle of the train could be heard weird animal shrieks of terror, such as have been known to be a prelude to a storm or cyclone.

After leaving Blairsville, the junction of the branch line, the engine struck the switch and almost left the track. The going became easier when a stone crashed through the window of the cab, just missing the engineer. He used his brakes to advantage, now, and came to a standstill.

A man ran to the cab breathlessly. He yelled that a mile ahead of them was a broken rail that would have unquestionably wrecked them.

Not knowing about the circus train he had been running back to the station to warn an express, due along in half an hour.

Running along on his mission, he left the circus train behind between two horrors. Coup decided that it was better to go ahead than attempt to go back to Blairsville. He always insisted on carrying extra rails for cases of emergency. Slowly the train advanced to the broken rail, and replaced it with

a new one, figuring that a wrecking crew would follow to do a really expert job. At the next town they switched onto a side track.

There Coup found that the second section of the circus train was due at nearly the same time as the express. But the trackwalker had succeeded in getting back to the station in time to stop the express, though luckily it was not quite due.

Finally it was discovered that the second circus section had added to it several railroad cars fitted with air-brakes instead of "common" brakes. As a consequence it had descended the mountain under perfect control. As a result of this experience, Coup furnished all his circus cars with air-brakes.

On another occasion, while going into Clinton, Iowa, with the big show, the locomotive jumped the track and struck a tree. The shock threw all the cars of the section on their ends. The Mississippi River was on one side and a hill on the other. Here were the cars, with animals inside, some killed and others in pain or terror.

Immediately work was started breaking up the cars and getting out the cages. This was not so difficult, but the horses that were not hurt were frightened. Thirty had been killed in the crash. Finally order was created out of chaos, but one of the most valuable of the ring stock, an "entry" animal, was so bruised about the head that he presented a terrible appearance.

The horse was treated for many days, since it was trusted that the wounds would not be disfiguring.

One afternoon, just as the grand entry was being presented, Coup's head groom was surprised at the entrance of this horse. Hearing the familiar music that was a cue to him, he burst his rope in some fashion, and without bridle, saddle or halter, went through the familiar figures of the music he had been taught so many times.

The music was stopped, for the animal's head was swathed in bandages, and he presented a gruesome appearance. The groom was about to take the prized beast away, when Coup ordered the band to start again, saying he would not hurt the feelings of the dumb animal so loyal to the show.

The Hippodrome

AFTER two record seasons of the Greatest Show on Earth, Coup planned a great Hippodrome, indoors, in New York City. His ambitions were always of the greatest. Here again, strangely, the railroad comes into his life—at the peak of his career, too, so tragically.

At that time the New York Central Buildings were being removed from the site included between Madison and Fourth Avenues, and Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Streets.

Coup secured a real estate option and sold stock in what he called the New York Hippodrome, afterward to become famous as Madison Square Garden. The New York Hippodrome opened on April 27, 1874.

Coup's entire interest was tied up at the New York Hippodrome during that season; the next spring he was obliged to take a continental trip for his health.

During his absence P. T. Barnum allowed two different showmen to use his name, which confused the public, and proved bad for business. Upon his return, Coup broke with Barnum, impulsively; indeed, the man could have no master.

His next enterprise was to build the New York Aquarium, in partnership

with Charles Reiche, a famous animal dealer. The building was situated at Thirty-Fifth Street and Broadway, and proved a great success. The two men could not, however, get along from the start. Finally, failing to agree, Coup lost his entire holdings on the toss of a coin, and calmly walked off the property.

For some years Coup had his own shows, with some success, until 1882, when bad luck hit him a terrific blow from which he never recovered. His "W. C. Coup's United Monster Shows" was at the time one of the largest on the road. The worst of weather struck the territory Coup was playing, and on August 19, just north of Cairo, a railroad smash-up placed him in a bad way financially.

Just as he was getting back upon his feet, three of his principal employees attached the show for debt for five thousand dollars for back salaries. As further attachments rolled in, the circus was sold at auction, at a pitiful figure.

From this blow Coup never really recovered. He next organized a dog and pony show, followed it with a small museum concern, which was exhibited on railroad sidings, and various small showman enterprises paltry in comparison to his former great dreams that came into being. After 1891, Coup retired to his place near Delevan, Wisconsin. He died at Jacksonville, Florida, March 4, 1895.

The reason for the lack of prominence of W. C. Coup and every one else connected with P. T. Barnum is not hard to see. Barnum took credit for everything, during his lifetime, and his book, "Struggles and Triumphs," were sold by hundreds of thousands along with tickets of admission. He was such a unique, picturesque figure that those about him, no matter what their status, paled alongside the color of his conversation, deeds, and personality.

W. C. Coup never was a type that sought personal publicity; avoided it, in fact; and for that reason his name is unknown except to rare students of circus literature, mostly out of print and unobtainable by the general public.

So it does seem fair that the man responsible for the three-ring circus, and the first showman inspired to put it on the rails, should be given his due, credit honor and praise.

LOYAL CO-OPERATION

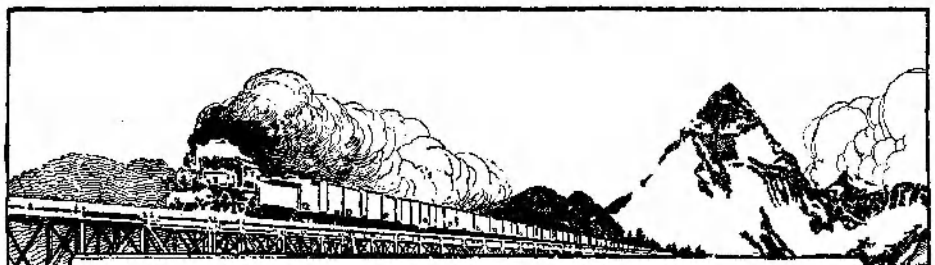
IN many transportation circles the growing tendency of the railroads to take their employees more and more into their confidence is considered one of the most forward movements in encouraging loyalty and good will.

Some of the railroads now are using their employees' magazines to cite instances where public commendation of men in various branches of the service has been received by division officials. These letters are printed, and the name of the employee is prominently displayed.

A number of railroads are meeting with success in encouraging their employees to watch out for better business opportunities.

It is now no uncommon thing for a fireman to land a carload shipment of freight for his road by tipping off the freight traffic department as to where such a shipment is being originated.

The same holds true for brakemen, telegraph operators, and, in fact, most every class of employee, and the move, without question, is a splendid one.



REMEMBERING

By Frank Bennett

OH, for the hiss of flying steam
And a wild ride through the night!
Watching the shadows flee from the beam
Of your frosty, dazzling light!

Spectres, shrouded all in black,
That watch by the right of way;
Only the poles that line the track
In the sober light of day.

Flashing side rods chanting the rhyme,
To the tune that your smokestack sings;
Drivers on the rail joints beating time,
And the bell a low note flings.

Semaphores wave that the way is clear;
And they wink, with their big green eyes—
And haunting doubt, and craven fear
Into the darkness flies.

Trestle and fill, and gentle roll
Of prairie under the stars—
Valley and hill and rounded knoll
Drop into the dark, with the cars.

Towns that slumber 'neath the moon,
And fields of fragrance sweet,
Never hear your wailing croon—
Nor feel your flying feet.

Panting, striving beast of steel,
With your leaping heart of flame!
Oh, to go with you again, and feel
The thrill of playing the game!

Eyes that have known the shining trails—
With you—behind you light—
Never again shall scan the rails
To guide your headlong flight!

Hands, that once were thrilled to feel
Your pulse on the Johnson bar—
Never again will polished steel
Their pale white cleanness mar.

With folded hands, and eyes that are dim,
I'll watch from the hill above you;
While you go on, with the youngsters trim,
Why—I'll sit here—and love you!

I Remember When

The Specter of Death Rode the Ice Storm, But Shackley, the Traveling Hogger, Was Hard at the Latch on the Mail

By Victor Maxwell

ALL day long men had paused before the bulletin board, sometimes singly and sometimes in groups of as many as half a dozen—to scan the posting of the new "sign up." Sometimes the bulletin was silently regarded, then again there were comments or sharp interchanges. Individually every man had known, long before it was posted, the manner in which the runs had been allotted after the bidding by seniority; but it was something to see it all typed out plainly, so that comparisons could be made.

Most of the comment, when it was made, centered upon the absence from the list of three names, Bill Rodgers, Hy Glenn and Bob Shackley. Veteran engineers, all of them, they had headed the seniority lists; and always before they had picked their runs according to their individual tastes. Rodgers and Shackley had invariably picked the two crack trains, and Glenn had made his choice a group of short local runs.

There had been, in the old days, endless argument over this; the majority holding that Rodgers and Shackley showed good sense, while Glenn was exhibiting a perverseness of nature in taking, time after time, short runs with many stops and a day of

THEY TRIED TO GRASP THIS STRANGE FIGURE, BUT THEIR GLOVED HANDS SLIPPED FROM ITS SLICK SURFACE

broken hours. The minority, however held that Glenn always slept in the same room o' nights and had little to worry about with trains of four to seven light cars on a schedule easy enough to hold; whereas Rodgers and Shackley, they held, were faced on alternate days with the job of whipping from ten to fifteen heavy coaches, most of them Pullmans, over the length of the division, bucking mountain grades and all sorts of weather hazards, and facing endless chances for delay and trouble, either on their own account or because the trains were delivered to them late from the adjoining division.

However, the three were now off the list. A footnote briefly stated that Rodgers and Glenn had retired on pension after long and faithful service, and " R. S. Shackley is appointed traveling engineer for the western division."

There was a lot of talk about that. Some of the older heads, with sly winks at one another, pointed out that Shackley had pulled wires and gracefully sidestepped retiring on pension pay, though his years of service were greater than any other on the division. To the younger runners, the news of Shackley's appointment was not a thing of joy; for in days gone by it had been Bob's hobby to continually

"ride" the men who had ascended to the right-hand side of the cab, and to scornfully tell them how little they knew of real railroading.

"Railroadin'," he would snort. "Huh! You don't know what railroadin' is. You got double track an' automatic blocks an' now even this new-fangled automatic train control. If you only had somebody to start your mules for you, all you'd have to do would be to sit on your cushions and watch the scenery roll by. Railroadin'—why, I remember when—"

And then he would unwind some yarn. Shackley's yarns were works of art. Mainly they were founded on fact, but also they were embellished with details that only long experience and a vivid imagination could provide. And always they started with the same phrase: "I remember when." And so, in time, Bob Shackley had come to be known among the younger engineers, at least, as Old I Remember When. To the older runners he was Bob, and by them was almost lovingly regarded; but to the younger men he was anathema in many ways. And as traveling engineer he loomed before them as trouble.

The new "sign up" posted and in effect, routine on the western division proceeded as it always does with any well-organized and highly skilled technical group. Trains moved in and out of the terminal as they had always done, and if, for two or three days, there was more than usual consultation of watches and time-tables, it was merely because the men were accustoming themselves to their new runs. At the end of the first week things went with clocklike regularity, and the runners had become so accustomed to their new schedules that they had time for the myriad speculations that are a part of railroad life. And chief among them were those that centered about Shackley.

When would he begin riding? What would he have to say, if anything? What would he report about the different runs and about the runners? Would he climb on the gangway at the terminal, so you could know in advance he would be with you; or would he bob up unexpectedly at some station outside? The old heads had not much fear, they looked on Bob as a friend and as one who knew the problems of handling an engine intimately; but the younger men fretted, and wished the experience would begin.

So day after day passed, and still the new traveling engineer was only seen, occasionally, seated at his desk in the little office at the far end of the locker room, silently smoking a black pipe and poring ceaselessly over report sheets. Whence came these reports nobody knew, and what they contained was a profound mystery. The older heads smiled and waited, content to be left alone; the younger men fretted, fumed, worried, and took it out on their firemen.

Four o'clock in the afternoon, and from then on for half an hour, found most of the engineers in the locker room. The evening suburban runs called the majority of them; there were also men coming off from the longer day runs, and often members of the night crews showed up early, to make reports, to check over engines which they had turned in for minor repairs, or to sit in for awhile at the endless games of checkers or pitch. So, with the room crowded, a month after the new "sign up," the door of Bob Shackley's little office opened and he lurched his huge bulk out into the center of the chamber. The buzz of con-

versation died down suddenly, hands paused over the checkerboards, and the only sound to break the stillness was the slap of a card thrown down by an enthusiastic and winning pitch-player.

"Boys," said Shackley, "I got a few things to say. As you know, I've been made traveling engineer of the western division. The duties of a travelin' engineer, as you know, is to go over the road an' keep in touch with the personnel, an' see how the service can be bettered. He's supposed to listen to complaints about engines not steamin' an' all that sort of thing, an' to make the runs with the regular crews an' see what's wrong. I been on the job for a month now, an' maybe some of you wonder why I haven't been out on the road.

"Well, I want to tell you. I can remember when a travelin' engineer was a hell-ridin' devil. When I had a run I've had 'em swing into my cab, with blood in their eye, an' tell me that the trouble I'd reported wasn't the fault of the engine, but was all because I was such a numskull I didn't know how to handle a throttle, an' I had to take it, an' move back on the seat an' see one of these guys climb up, ride fifty miles or so, all the time alibi-ing for the operatin' department an' tryin' to prove that I was wrong. I've had travelin' engineers climb into my cab that couldn't handle a cabbage-cutter shuntin' empties about the yards, an' try an' tell me I didn't know how to keep a boiler steamin', or how to get the most out o' my coal.

"Well, boys, when I was made travelin' engineer I made up my mind I wasn't goin' to have every man's hand on the division raised against me. In the first place, I know most of you boys and look on you as my friends. And, in the second place, things are different now from what they used to be. Railroadin' to-day ain't what it used to be. I can remember when—but never mind that now. What I want to say is this: to-day you boys have got everythin' in your favor. You got engines to-day that's built for the work they got to do. You got engines that's handed out to you in tiptop condition, and that's gone over by a good roundhouse crew after every run and kept up to the mark.

"I can remember when all we had was old eight-wheelers, an' they was just the same engines for freight as for the fastest passenger runs. Each engineer then had his own iron mule, an' when he wasn't tryin' to get steam out of her on the road, she was sittin' in the roundhouse, with some lunkhead standin' beside her lookin' at a trouble slip, scratchin' his head, an' then goin' an' gettin' a can of paint an' paintin' the part you'd reported for repairs, an' lettin' it go at that. All the roundhouse crew ever did in them days was to put new packin' in a gland, or to drive up a wedge alongside a loose brass somewheres, an' then paint the part. Hot repairs was mostly paint jobs, an' it was up to the runner to keep his own engine in shape as best he could.

"But now you got things different. Engines is pooled in service. As I say, you got special engines for every class of service, the best that can be designed. Your engines are delivered to you in the best of condition; they got real machinists in the roundhouse gang; an' if there's a job they can't handle, they'll run the old mule down to the shops an' have the work done there. When you start out on a run to-day you got a damn good machine under you for the service you're supposed to deliver; and, barrin' break-

downs, if you don't get what you're supposed to out o' the wagon, it's your fault an' not the fault o' the engine. Which brings us down to me.

"What's a travelin' engineer supposed to do these days? Between you and me, boys, with all the experts they got on a railroad to-day, a travelin' engineer is pretty near nothin' but an old hoghead sittin' at a desk an' drawin' double pension pay.

"You boys been expectin' me to ride the runs with you. What for? To teach you how to get steam? That's nonsense. You got oil-burners, an' you never have any trouble with your fire. It ain't like the old days when you got all kinds of coal and some that wasn't coal at all, and when a good fireman was a gift of God. Now all your firemen's got to do is to turn a valve, an' you got any sort of a fire you want. You got feedwater heaters, so you never run down your pressure with cold water, like you used to do. Any man who can't keep steam to-day don't belong on a railroad, that's all; for no travelin' engineer could teach him how.

"As for makin' time, you got schedules an' time-tables, an' they've figgered out for you how many miles per you're to run between this station an' that. You got automatic blocks to tell you how your track is; an' all passin' worries are took off your minds by dispatchers, who's got an 'lectric telltale board in front of 'em all the time, with the location of every string of cars on the division showin' plain. All you got to do is to run your mules, an' you got the best conditioned, specialized mules for service that designers can turn out. So it looks like you don't need any travelin' engineer to ride with you an' give you pointers on this or that.

"Well, they made me travelin' engineer. A lot of you boys, when you heard I'd got the job, you winked an' nodded your heads, an' says: 'That's pretty soft for old Bob.' Now I want to tell you somethin'. Old Bob Shackley isn't the guy to hold down a soft job. When I get so old I can't be any use on a railroad, I got a place to go—an' I got enough put by, too, so I don't need no company pension, either.

"Dave Hill, he calls me into his office before last 'sign up,' an' he says for me to stay out, that he's got a new job for me. Says he's goin' to make me travelin' engineer. An' I told him to go to hell. I told him if he wanted me to quit, that was all right, that I knew I was gettin' on in years, an' that this was a day of younger men. But as for me takin' a soft an' easy job—I appreciated the offer an' I knew why it was made, an' all that, but he could have my resignation right then; and as for pension pay, he knew what he could do with that, too. That's what I told Dave Hill.

"An' Dave, he tells me to set the air, that I've run in on the wrong line. 'Bob,' he says, 'this division needs a travelin' engineer, an' you're the man we want for the job. You've been railroadin' all your life; you come to this road when it was only two streaks o' rusty, secondhand rails runnin' up into the hills to the mines, haulin' ore down to tidewater an' haulin' the empties up again. There's more to railroadin', Bob, than just haulin' people an' freight an' deliverin' them on time an' in comfort.

"'The biggest thing to-day, Bob, is competition, an' the biggest way to beat competition is to make the travelin' public an' the shippin' public think your road is better'n the other fellow's road. Now, Bob, we got our public

relations service an' our advertising service, an' they're both deliverin' the goods; but there's one place we're fallin' down, and that's in the operatin' department. Now we want you to be travelin' engineer on this western division. You take a month to look things over; you get reports any way you see fit; we'll O. K. anything you say, an' then we want you to take this gang of enginemen and firemen in hand an' show 'em that there's somethin' more to railroadin' than just pullin' tonnage over the division on time.'"

"I GOT SOME REPORTS HERE ON YOU BOYS"

Shackley stopped and looked at the men. Checkers and cards had been forgotten; every face was turned toward Old I Remember When. Each runner in the locker room was thinking; wondering what Bob had found out during his month of examination, wondering how he had found it out.

"Boys," resumed Shackley, "Dave Hill an' me, we had a long talk, an' I finally said I'd take the job. Then I took a coupla days to figger out how I was goin' to find out the things we both 'd have to know. Finally I got it planned. There's no question, boys, about you bein' good railroaders. You got good engines, an' you know how to handle 'em. You make your time. Most o' you is drawin' bonuses for economical fuel an' oil consumption, an' things like that. But I been gettin' reports on you—all of you. I been gettin' reports from shacks an' porters and station agents on what the travelin' public has had to say about our

trains an' how they're handled. I been gettin' the ideas of a lot o' people who don't know the difference between a semaphore an' sidin' target.

"I know what they think of the western division, an' I've put that together with what I know about railroadin', an' I got some things to say to you. I'm goin' to say 'em to you in general, here an' now. Later on I'm goin' to see that each of you get 'em in individual reports. And then I'm goin' to start ridin'. I'm goin' to be a travelin' engineer that you'll know about. I may not climb up in the cab with you, but I'll be ridin' the train somewheres; an' I don't want to have to tell you boys the same thing more'n twice."

Shackley moved over to one of the tables at which the card players had gathered, and, perching himself on one end of it, reached in a pocket and drew out a handful of small cards. Glancing at these, as he shuffled them slowly, he faced the men again.

"I got some reports here," he said. "Some of 'em are on you boys, an' some of 'em are about boys now out on the road. I'm goin' to call names, an' I don't want any of you to get sore. What I'm sayin' isn't in the line of a bawl-out; it's to make the service on the western division better as far as the enginemen go. And that's all my job is right now.

"I got a report here on you, Leahy. It says you handle No. 26 too rough. You bring her up standin' when you stop her, an' you pull out with a jerk. No. 26 ain't no cattle train, Leahy. She's a local, an' I know you got a lot o' stops an' a tight schedule. You got one of the 4000 engines on her, what 'll handle ten cars easy, an' you haul on an average only half that. But that's no reason why you got to whip her in an' out like she was full of scrap iron an' junk. Commuters like to ride easy just as much as Pullman passengers. If you don't know how to start an' stop with a light load, I'll ride with you some day an' show you.

"Billings, I got a report on you that every time you pull out o' Dexterville you give her a full head o' steam an' spin your drivers. Then you throttle down an' start easy. You know better than that, an' the fact that you only do it at Dexterville tells me you're tryin' to show off. Now, showin' off is all right in its place, Billings, an' you may be makin' a hit with some milk-fed skirt up there; but you're not only jarrin' your engine to pieces, but you're jarrin' somebody's nerves an' makin' 'em hate the company, else I wouldn't have a report on it. Cut it out.

"You, Nesbit, are reported as always runnin' 'way up the platform at Schuyler before you stop. I couldn't believe that at first, for you know how to handle a train too good for that. So I made some inquiries, an' I found out you an' the club-foot station agent there had a jam wunst, an' you figgered you was gettin' even with him, makin' him haul the baggage truck clear up onto the rough board apron at the end of the platform. If you got a grouch at this station agent, go in an' beat him up an' get it over with. Then stop your train where you should, so the passengers won't have to follow you halfway to the city before they can get aboard. You may be gettin' even with the station agent, but you're gettin' the public that buys tickets sore an' givin' the bus drivers a chance to get 'em.

"Kelsey, I got a report says you're sloppy about spottin' gondolas at the clay factory. O' course, the bohunks

there can take a pinch bar an' move the gondolas back to the chutes, but you're supposed to spot 'em when you drop 'em off. I got the same kind of a kick about you, Weems, at the flivver plant. You may not like flivvers, but the company is sellin' service, an' you're workin' for the company. I know it takes time to spot cars at these jerkwater stops; but you want to take the time.

"I got a lot o' kicks about whistling. Especially from Emeryville, where there's three grade-crossin's in a row on the big curve down to the river. I got reports that say Ballard, Tankhouse, Shawley, Bromley, and Murphy start yankin' the whistle lever half a mile outside o' Emeryville, an' never let go o' it till they get a mile the other side. An' I got another set o' reports that says Blaney, Williams, Rourke, Holloway, and Davis only whistle wunst for all three crossin's. You boys want to use your heads up there.

"Well, I see it's gettin' near time for some of you boys to pull out. That 'll be enough for now. I'll send you the rest of it in letters. You see what I'm doin'—I'm tryin' to get you boys to think of somethin' besides what's in the rule books. To think of the public. It may be a new idea to some of you; but railroadin' ain't what it used to be. The railroadin' part is easy now, with everythin' automatic, or nearly so; but you got some other things to think about. The idea, boys, is this: we not only want to keep the western division a good railroad, but we want to make it the most popular railroad, too. An' that's the job you got to help me on, an' that I'm goin' to try an' help you on."

The men reacted well to the new idea. At first there was considerable joking about it, especially among the younger men on the crews; but in a very short time the idea took hold. Just how much that intangible goodwill with the public was built up was perhaps problematical, but there developed a different air all along the division. Many things were suggested and tried out; some plans were kept permanently, others were discarded. The knowledge that Shackley might be riding trains, though not appearing in the cab, kept the engine crews on their toes; and discovery of the fact that he was still human and likable, and had not turned into an ogre, went a long way toward keeping the effort to please the public a constant one.

Shackley had been made traveling engineer in midsummer, and he was still on the job when winter came, with its added trials and problems. Snow brought the peril of delayed trains and vexed, impatient passengers; but by almost superhuman efforts and coöperation, marked-up arrivals were held to the minimum. Even freight was kept rolling almost on schedule, and operating department heads smiled at a time of the year when previously frowns had been the prevailing expression. Then, suddenly, as so often happens in railroading, came the unexpected.

II

THE western division, stretching inland from tidewater, cut through the mountains by what was known as the gorge route. Following the course of a river, the rails twisted and curved between the water's edge and rock walls of a mighty cañon, basalt ramparts that sloped steeply upward for a thousand feet or more before they slanted more gently back to the domes and peaks of the range pierced by the stream. These walls were so steep that but little snow clung to them be-

low the thousand-foot level. Whenever the fall of white crystals was excessive, drifts might pile high on the upper levels, but the cañon walls stayed mainly bare, both gravity and the winds sweeping them clear. Sometimes wet snow clung to the rocks for a while; but whenever more than three or four inches gathered, the weight of the fall alone was sufficient to bring the padded deposits down in white cascades, which were whipped to a mere flurry of flakes long before the track was reached. Pilot plows were enough to keep the rails clear, and the gorge was always regarded as an open route.

Came a day, however, when the elemental forces of nature clashed over the gorge. A deluge of rain, sweeping in from the western ocean expanse, poured an incessant cataract of water from the skies. The storm, sweeping inland, crashed against the mountain range and its blanket of snow-cooled air. There two things happened: the rain was transformed to snow, and the warmer air, rising, upset the atmospheric stability over the western slopes of the peaks and set in motion a sort of horizontal whirlpool, a vast, revolving wave, miles long, whose center was over the gorge.

Sucked down into this maelstrom from above came a great inrush of frigid air from the higher spaces of the atmosphere, and this cold, dropping with lightning speed in obedience to physical laws, roared down into the gorge. There, penned like the spill from a gigantic reservoir, it piled up temporarily, and then began to flow down over the river, between the rock walls, westward to the open areas near tidewater. This was the elemental drama; the immediate effect of which was to drive down through the gorge a gale of bitter cold wind, a frigid river, invisible, mighty, which swept and blustered and whined and whistled about the rock pinnacles — a roaring, howling stream of close to zero cold.

Into this freezing river of rushing air poured the rain from the sea-born storm. There was no time for the gentle change of raindrops to snowflakes, such as took place on the higher slopes of the mountains. Instead, the globules of water from the clouds were instantly transformed to ice as they fell into this invisible polar torrent that poured down through the gorge. Caught up by the rush of the gale, the particles of ice were slapped against everything that stood in the way—slapped against it to stick. The rock walls of the gorge grew a mantle of clear ice which curiously magnified the brown surface beneath and smoothed over the angular faces of the basalt with rolling waves of hard treachery.

Wires no thicker than a lead pencil in the afternoon by sundown-time had grown to weird strands, three inches in diameter, dull black and glistening. Telegraph poles, semaphore stands, right-of-way stakes, trees, every upjutting thing in the gorge, grew prodigiously, first piling up a coating of ice on the eastern side, and this gradually creeping round both north and south sides and joining on the west. So the accretions of ice piled up, transforming the gorge into a mad cañon of nightmare shapes; while its basalt walls, coated ever more and more deeply, donned a sleek covering of congealed water that grew from inches in thickness finally to great, clinging ice masses that turned cloudy white and covered the rocky ramparts to a depth of many feet.

By six o'clock the wires, sagging under their burden of ice, brought messages from the eastern end of the

gorge that all west-bound trains were being held, as the block system was frozen up. Should A-B-C dispatching be resorted to? asked the message; and before the answer could be sent the question was settled as ice-coated wires, no longer able to stand the strain, broke under their frigid load and fell, to be cemented in sleet-bound tangles on the ground. West-bound, the division came to a halt.

At tidewater, with the rain pouring down in torrents, east- and west-bound suburban traffic struggled through such an evening as seldom had been experienced. Culvert failures kept section crews scurrying, lest embankments be washed out. By dint of desperate work by all hands, the rush hour was passed safely and trains kept moving; but as the hands of the clock crept onward past six, profound concern spread through the operating department.

The first section of the Overland—No. 2, east-bound—was due to leave the terminal at seven. The line of glittering Pullmans waited in the trainshed, while up ahead the great ten-wheeler that was to haul it on the first stage of its journey, stood just beyond shelter, sluiced by the pouring rain. Joe Turnbull, engineer, sat on the right of the cab, secure behind closed windows and storm curtains; while in the gangway "Red" Eads, his fireman, was fiddling with gauges and working up his steam to its acme of efficiency.

In the dispatcher's office a wire by a roundabout route had been opened to the eastern end of the gorge, and assurance obtained that all west-bound traffic was being held there. The last train through the gorge, No. 223, fast freight, was already at Schuyler, on the tidewater lowlands, so the gorge itself was known to be clear.

Dave Hill, watch in hand, stood beside the dispatcher, wrestling with the problem. The gorge was clear of traffic, so it mattered not if block signals were frozen—yet should No. 2 be sent out? He turned to Bob Shackley, who had accompanied him in from the roundhouse offices.

"What you think, Bob?" he asked.

Shackley took his pipe from his mouth and blew a cloud of smoke at the incandescents.

"Turnbull's a good head," he said. "And No. 2's never missed a trip yet. I remember when—back in '82 it was—there was a blizzard—"

Dave Hill waved a hand.

"Yes, I know," he cut in. "And, as you say, No. 2's never been cancelled yet."

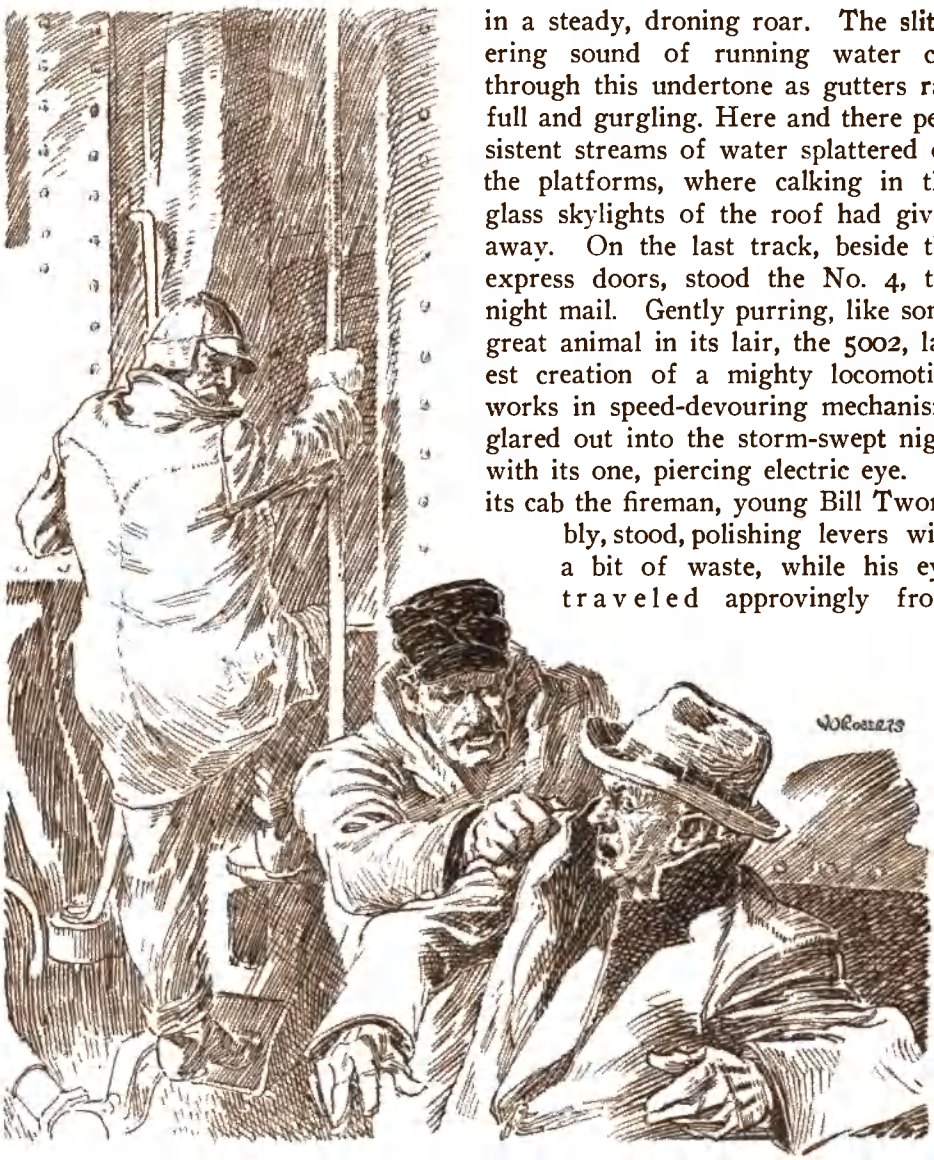
He turned to the dispatcher and nodded. The gray-haired man at the desk pulled a train-order blank to him and wrote on it, then handed the triplicate slips to a call-boy, who slipped out the door.

"I said 'Proceed with caution and be governed by circumstance in the gorge.' That ought to cover it," he said.

Hill nodded slowly.

Down in the trainshed the call-boy ran to Dad Peterson, silver-haired conductor of No. 2, and passed over the order slips. Dad read the top copy, tore it off and thrust it in his pocket, and passed the remaining two to his head brakeman, Ned Weston. Weston glanced at the orders, turned up his coat collar, buttoned his jacket, and started toward the head of the train. On the way he tore the slips apart, thrusting his copy in his pocket; then, diving into the swishing rain beyond the trainshed, he clambered on the step leading to the cab-riser and thrust the engineer's copy through the curtain.

A moment later he was back in the



"YOU LISTEN TO ME! I AM GOIN' TO RIDE THIS WAGON TO-NIGHT"

shelter of the trainshed, holding his lantern to relay Dad Peterson's high-ball to Turnbull. Two minutes later, with slow, booming exhausts sending billows of steam from the stack into defiance of the rain, No. 2 pulled out into the weather.

At midnight the rain was hammering at the arched roof of the trainshed in a steady, droning roar. The slithering sound of running water cut through this undertone as gutters ran full and gurgling. Here and there persistent streams of water splattered on the platforms, where calking in the glass skylights of the roof had given away. On the last track, beside the express doors, stood the No. 4, the night mail. Gently purring, like some great animal in its lair, the 5002, latest creation of a mighty locomotive works in speed-devouring mechanism, glared out into the storm-swept night with its one, piercing electric eye. In its cab the fireman, young Bill Twombly, stood, polishing levers with a bit of waste, while his eye traveled approvingly from gauge to gauge and back to water glass. Beside the great monster of the rails were Jim Calhoun, engineer, Dave Hill, Bob Shackley, and a waiting call-boy.

"I'll ride with you, Jim," said Bob.

"Mebbe you will," said Dave Hill. "I'm not sure I'll let her go."

Shackley gave a short laugh. "It's the mail," he said. "You got to."

"Like hell I got to," crisply replied Hill. "We got a wire to the east of the gorge, round through Plumas and Crystal Lake, and the No. 2 isn't through yet. I can hold the mail till the gorge—"

"Yuh got two tracks," cut in Shackley. "There's nothin' movin' west; everythin' held. No. 2 is on the east-bound track. You can't hold the mail and have the Federal inspectors find out you had the west-bound track clear."

Dave Hill bowed his head. "I know it, knew it all the time," he said, his voice perilously near breaking. "What did you have to tell me for?"

"Tell you? Why, I didn't tell you nothin'," answered Shackley. "Just reminded you of it, that's all. No. 2's likely laid out somewhere. It's icy in the gorge, probably wire down on the track. An' you know what it is to chop wire out of ice. Why, I remember when—"

Hill turned savagely to the call-boy.

"Run, son," he said, "and tell them No. 4 will take the west-bound track."

The boy dashed off for the dispatcher's office, and Hill turned to Shackley.

"I'll ride her," he said. "You stay here."

Jim Calhoun slowly climbed into the cab, and Shackley took Hill by the shoulders and pushed him over to the far side of the platform.

"Dave, you old seacook," he said, "you listen to me. I'm goin' to ride this wagon to-night. You go on home to the missus and the kids. You go on home, Dave, you've got a missus and kids, an' I—I haven't. It won't be bad. Why, I been through the gorge in worse weather than this. I remember when, now, back in '84 it was—"

"Oh, shut up your 'I remember when,' will you? Bob, I—I guess you're right. So long, old-timer, an' good luck."

He turned away quickly and walked back down the platform. Shackley clambered up onto the gangway, jerked the storm-curtain across and tied the straps firmly. Then he climbed up on the right hand seat, Calhoun edging forward to make room for him.

III

THE 5002 gathered speed and tore over the flats, defying the rain and pulling along behind it at ever increasing speed its string of swaying mail-cars, in some of which the clerks were already busy sorting letters, while in others there tossed back and forth mere inert pouches as the storage coaches rocked and pitched. The rain streamed in rivers across the forward windows of the cab, and flew past the side windows in a white spray.

"It's a wet night, Jimmy," shouted Shackley into the engineer's ear. "Look at that water fly, will you? Reminds me: I remember when, over on the old Springwater Division, I was comin' down one night with a string of ore-cars, an' the dam at Spider Butte went out. Back in '83, that was. The dam was up a cañon about a mile east o' the line. There was a trestle with an old Howe truss in the middle of it over the cañon, and when we hit the crossin' she was bank full, for a fact.

"I see it as I was comin' down the grade, but with all them ore-cars behind I couldn't have stopped her, no matter what. Well, I says to myself, if we ever get on the trestle the weight of the ore-cars will hold her till we get across. So I opened her up an' took a run for it. Believe it or not, Jimmy, when we hit that trestle the water was already over the rails, or else the trestle was floatin' an' we pushed it

down when we hit it. Anyway, we took a dive right into it, and roared across.

"When we hit that Howe truss in the middle I felt her sag, an' I thought for a minute we'd go through; but she leaped over it, an' we come on to the other side. Clear, starlit night, it was, but the water flew off the windows, just like this to-night, as we swam through; and when I stopped down below the crossing at Jasonville to wire in that the dam had gone out, all them ore-cars was full o' nothin' but mud. That's the only time, afore to-night, Jimmy, that I've sat in a cab an' gone swimmin' at the same time."

The 5002 and its string of lurching mail-cars swept through Schuyler at fifty-five miles an hour, crashing over the points and frogs with a rattling roar like an artillery barrage as it slammed on its mad way through the yards. As the station flashed by the great engine gave a sharp heave and seemed for an instant to be swaying over, then settled level again and pounded on toward the east, speeding now for the gorge on the west-bound track.

"I'll say you took that cross-over plenty," shouted Shackley; "I'll bet the track gang 'll have to realign them rails. You went over that like old Gormley used to come round the curve at South Junction. I remember when, one time, he come round there with a extry freight, all structural iron and granite blocks for the new post office, an' nex' day the section gang found he'd pulled the curve eighteen inches off'n the right o' way. He sure used to be lucky at curves, old Gormley did.

"I remember when, one time, there was a freight piled up in the Silloway Cañon, an' Gormley come out on the wrecker. 'Must ha' been a bowlder fell on the track,' says the old head who was jerkin' the freight. 'Bowlder me eye,' says Gormley. 'I know what was the matter. You was tryin' to see how fast you could go round them curves. Funny thing about that, ol'-timer, you never know how fast you can take a curve till you do it too fast, and then the knowledge don't do you any good.'"

The rivers of water streaming over the front window became flecked with floating islands as the 5002 settled down to her work and began to strike the grade into the foothills. The rain here was turning to snow; it was a mixture of water and water-soaked flakes. Jim Calhoun reached around and pushed the glass weather-wing into place beside the cab window, to deflect the flying flakes. For a time this served, and the men, peering ahead, had vision in the ray of the giant headlight, though curious dancing shadows on the right of way told them snow was piling up and slipping down over the front of the light. The fireman, well trained, stepped down from his seat and produced leather coats from the tender locker. Bob Shackley helped Calhoun don his, and then squirmed into his own.

The night grew rapidly colder. The rain seemed to cease suddenly, and the snow grew heavier. The window at the front of the cab took on an opaque covering, and Calhoun, pulling his cap forward and his ear-laps down, kept poking his head clear of the wind breaker to scan the track ahead. Shackley began to slowly button up his storm clothes, and alternated with Calhoun in peeping out from the side of the cab into the night. The snow was now driving past in horizontal streaks, and all the country was white.

"Some night!" shouted Shackley.

"Boy, it's going to be good in the gorge. I remember when, one night back in—"

His voice stopped suddenly. The 5002 topped a rise and came out onto the tangent leading to the mouth of the gorge. The cab shivered with the impact of some invisible force, and an icy, breath-taking cold gale poured into the cab. The snow was no longer streaking by; it was a white haze into which the headlight beam bored futilely, to be reflected back in a dazzling aura of sparkling points of blue flame.

"Zowie!" exclaimed Calhoun, and he slid the cab window forward and shut. Instantly the glass was covered with a mist. And then, above the clanking, droning roar of the engine, there came a new sound—a persistent hissing, caused by the striking against the cab of thousands of particles of ice, hurled by the arctic gale that was pouring out of the gorge. In an instant the front window became a solid white mass, illumined only from the inside by the glow from the gauge lamps. The storm curtains slapped and crackled; and still the 5002 bored into the weather.

They knew by the lurch of the engine that she had left the tangent and entered the gently winding track at the mouth of the gorge, but outside they could see nothing but an all-embracing dull white mist. Shackley reached for the main light switch and turned it, and instantly the cab was plunged in darkness, save for orange-hued radiant cracks about the firebox door. Outside, the dull white wall had vanished, the night was black, utterly dark, featureless. The cab windows were dull, glossy black, and through them there was revealed no slightest glimmer of the electric headlight on the front of the engine.

"Sufferin' catfish, Bob," exclaimed Calhoun, "we're iced in!"

His hand eased the throttle lever in, and the 5002 immediately began to lose headway. Shackley felt the change in speed, and switched on the gauge-lights again. Then he reached forward and gripped Calhoun's left arm.

"Don't cut her down," he shouted in the other's ear. "If you ever lose your headway on this icy track, you're laid out. That's probably what happened to Turnbull on No. 2. Keep her driving into it."

Calhoun drew the throttle lever gently back to the point on the quadrant where it had been before, and then turned to Shackley.

"But, my God, Bob," he said, "we can't run her blind like this. There might be—"

"Yuh got to run her blind," cut in Shackley, "or freeze your face lookin' out. Yuh got a clear line, haven't you? There's nothin'—"

Calhoun shook his head. "I don't like it, Bob. Storm like this and tearing into it blind. And with No. 2 out there somewhere. No telling what—"

He stopped suddenly as the 5002 lurched around a curve and then straightened out on a bit of tangent. Shackley saw the cords on his left hand rise as he took a grip on the throttle lever.

"I'll drive her a while," the traveling engineer said crisply, reaching forward and jerking Calhoun's hand from the lever. "You sit back here. You can edge by me. Jim, this ain't nothin'. I remember when—"

Something hit the cab roof with a shattering crash. For an instant they heard things sliding over the canvas, and then there was no noise but the proper sounds of the engine as the great machine tore mightily into the

storm. Calhoun slipped back over the cushions, crowding against the window, and Bob Shackley did a gymnastic twist to get by the reverse lever and so find his place on the front of the seat with his feet under the airbrake valve stand. Instantly a piercing cold draft struck through the leather of his shoes; bitter air from the gorge seeping up through the plating where the pipes went through. He moved his feet to one side, but they stayed cold.

The fireman, who had leaped down from his seat when the crash came on the roof, reached under the storm curtains and pulled something in, something that had dropped from the front of the tender. He held it up to Shackley, and in the glow from the gauge lamps the veteran engineman saw it was a lump of ice, to which there adhered on one side tiny bits of stone.

He pointed to it with his thumb, and turned his head, partly to face Calhoun.

"Bad," he shouted. "That's ice from the rock wall. Betcha the gorge is full of ice."

Then he turned forward again. Reaching out, he tried to open the front cab window. Nothing budged. He pushed with all his strength against it, but the frame held adamant. Thoughts of other days flashed into the veteran's head. Ice, he had seen that happen before. The whole front of the cab must be incased by now. To what depth he could only guess.

"Put out them lights," he shouted. Calhoun turned the switch, and the cab was plunged in darkness again. Shackley then eased in the throttle lever slightly; he knew the 5002 and its following cars were now entering the gorge proper, and he knew the curves of that winding passage. True, they were banked for speed, but there was no use in tempting fate too much. He would keep her rolling, rolling good, so she would not lose her headway; but that was all.

IV

THEN, in the dark, he devoted himself to the cab window beside him. Reaching up, he grasped the holds on the sash and tried to draw it back a bit. The sash would not move. He tried again, exerting more force. Still it would not budge. Frozen! And the glass covered with ice! For some moments he let the 5002 roar ahead blind, thinking. Then he turned to Calhoun and shouted.

"Listen, Jim. I'm goin' to bust open this window. You get over on the other side an' sit with the fireman. Don't worry about me. I been through this sort of stuff before. But you get over there—you'll freeze to death on this side. Me, I'll be sheltered by the front. Climb over there, now."

He waited till he felt the springs of the seat rise and knew Calhoun was out of the way. Then he took a screwdriver from the rack, felt carefully and got the point in the opening forward of the sash, and pried. The screwdriver accomplished nothing. He exerted greater pressure on it; it seemed to yield, then broke. He threw the handle down beside him and felt about the sash. Only the bent end of the piece of steel rewarded him.

Shackley buttoned up his leather coat, turned the collar up, buttoned that, pulled his earflaps down, pulled the vizor of his cap down. He reached to the rack and gripped a heavy barwrench; and as he touched it there was a tremendous crash right under his hand. Thought is lightning fast, or faster. At the instant of the impact Shackley pictured himself crushed or

cut in two at the next instant by the flail-like stroke of a broken side-rod; but as the instant came and went with no sanguinary results, he took a deep breath. Ice, forming on the rods, had been thrown up; that was all. Yet that was bad enough. It must be bad, indeed, in the gorge if ice would form on the flying rods.

SUDDENLY A GREAT SECTION OF THE SIDE OF THE CAB SEEMED TO FALL OUT

He lifted the gripped wrench and crashed it against the window glass beside him, shutting his eyes to protect them against flying fragments. The wrench seemed to have struck a solid wall. With his fingers he felt along the window; the glass was shattered, but outside was an unbroken wall of ice. The track angled in to the gorge, and it was there the ice had formed on that side of the cab. Donning his gloves, Shackley gripped the wrench again and went to work with a will. Two or three blows seemed to accomplish nothing; then suddenly a great sector of the side of the cab seemed to fall out and disappear.

There was a triangular, dull gray patch visible, just forward of his face, and through it swept a stinging stream of frigid air. He hammered at it with the wrench, and finally, after exhausting work, got it large enough to suit him, and properly shaped. Then, squinting his eyes to mere slits, he popped his head out for a flashing look ahead.

Though his face had been exposed to the full blast that was sweeping down the gorge merely for an instant, it was numb when he straightened in his place again. He pinched his cheeks with his gloved hand, and could barely feel it. He began to open and close his mouth, and to wiggle his lower jaw; but try as he would he could not at first raise his eyebrows or wrinkle the skin on his forehead. Nice weather, out there in the gorge.

And what had he seen? Nothing but a blur of dull white. There was a dark, truncated shadow, which he knew was the top of the boiler, with white mounds upon it. There seemed to be a bluish glow up ahead somewhere, and he supposed that was the headlight. Everything else was a dull white blur, with a sort of a sheen to it—ice. Well, if it got no worse, and if they had luck, they might get through; the 5002 still seemed to be pounding along.

But was she? He bent an attentive ear to the noises in the cab. She was still turning over at about the same speed, but was she making it? He glanced out through the hole into the white, and his eyes told him nothing. The 5002 was lurching and swaying as she should be doing at around forty, the throttle lever was in about the right position on the quadrant for that speed with the cut-off as it was set, yet Shackley began to have a growing suspicion that the wheels were not biting, and that the whole train was gradually, though almost imperceptibly, slowing down. If this were true it was due to but one thing; slip, because of the ice on the rails. Of course the 5002, merely by her weight, would crush to powder any reasonable amount of ice on the steel; but, judging by the looks of things about the cab, there was nothing reasonable about this storm in the gorge.

He looked at the broken hole that had been the window, and gave a distinct start. It was no longer the shape he had made it; a strip of ice was already forming on its front edge, and almost visibly adding to itself and extending back. He picked up the wrench again and struck at this, and discovered what was happening: a curtain of ice was forming over the opening a curtain over a quarter of an inch thick where he had broken it off.

The cab jarred again, this time from a crash on the left-hand side.

"Ice from the rods," he yelled over the butt of the boiler, to reassure the two men on that side.

For a time the 5002 continued to drive into the torrent of ice-incrusted wind that poured down through the gorge, and then Shackley realized that she was slipping, and slipping badly. In fact, the driving wheels were starting to race, shaking the whole engine violently. He slammed home the throttle and let her roll until she found her feet, and then began to tease the lever back again. The idea of sand occurred to him, but he dismissed it with a smile, and reached for the sanding lever just to try it. The lever would not move, and he smiled wryly. Even if it would, the sand was doubtless frozen solid, though it was supposed to be dry.

Then the 5002 took to dancing again, as her drivers once more failed to bite through the ice to the steel, and he had to shut her off. The minute she settled down he gave her steam again, but she was now losing speed rapidly. She lurched to a curve, and held her feet there under the double pressure of her weight and the impact of the throw off the tangent; but when she hit straight track again around the bend, the drivers took to racing once more.

"Well, I reckon I know now what happened to No. 2," said Bob to himself, and he settled down to a battle with those racing wheels, shutting off the instant the first chatter of slip came to him, and teasing her with steam again the moment she rolled steadily. It was a gamble whether he would be able to tease her through, or whether they would be laid out. She had already lost a lot of headway; he doubted now if she was rolling better than twenty-eight.

It depended on how far through the gorge he was. In the murk of white, and with Calhoun driving part of the time, he had lost all idea of distance. A glance at the chronometer wasn't any great help, because there was no telling how much slipping she had done before he realized it. Still, there ought not to be more than eight or ten miles,

at the outside, more of the gorge, and if he could tease her through that—

The thing to do was to find out where he was. Peering sidewise through the broken cab window told him nothing; there was only visible the blare of white, dull and sheened, in the half-light. So, giving his face a preliminary wriggling, to loosen up all its muscles, he squinted his eyes once more and thrust his head out for a good look ahead. The ice particles beat into his flesh like a white hot hail; his eyebrows stiffened and grew heavy with a ridge of frost that seemed to bulge out and blind him; but he forced himself to look into the fury of the gale, trying to identify some landmark.

And then, suddenly, half blinded, he jerked his head back into the cab and, turning across the butt of the boiler, shouted to the two men on the fireman's side:

"Duck! Duck, boys, she's comin'!"

Vaguely he saw them slide down from the cushions into the shelter, such as it was, of the boiler-butt. Then, face numb and aching, and eyes seared and almost blind, he shoved home the throttle lever, gave her a little air, jerked open the throttle again so her wheels would grind, and not lock and slip, and then, easing on more air with his right hand, reached up with his left for the whistle lever; knowing even as he did so, that it would be frozen tight in the mass of ice on the front of the cab, and that no warning scream would ring out.

And then waited an eternity. Things happened very slowly. The 5002 seemed to be slowing down as a lady should, not slipping, but firmly digging in her heels. And then she lost her poise, as it were, and grew skittish. She slowly lifted her nose and started uphill, with the weight of the train behind her helping her along. The top of the tender came in through the storm curtains, pushing them forward in a bulge over the gangway first, and then breaking through unceremoniously. The 5002 lifted her nose still higher, and there was a clattering racket as the tools under the seats crashed back in the boxes. And then something heavy struck Shackley's side of the cab and rubbed along it with a persistent and horrible grating. The ice on the windows dissolved, then the glass broke, then the window-frames themselves faded into nothingness. The seat upon which Bob had been a minute before crumpled up in strange folds, something dark and hideously green and slick shoved in—and then all movement ceased, all noise, of which there had been a prodigious amount, stopped, and Shackley realized that he was hanging with one hand to the whistle lever and looking at the letterboard of an all-steel Pullman, the lower part of which had sheared off, neatly and with precision, the outer three inches of the right hand side of the cab of the 5002.

Calhoun and the fireman poked their heads up from behind the boiler-butt.

"You hurt, Bob?" asked the engineer.

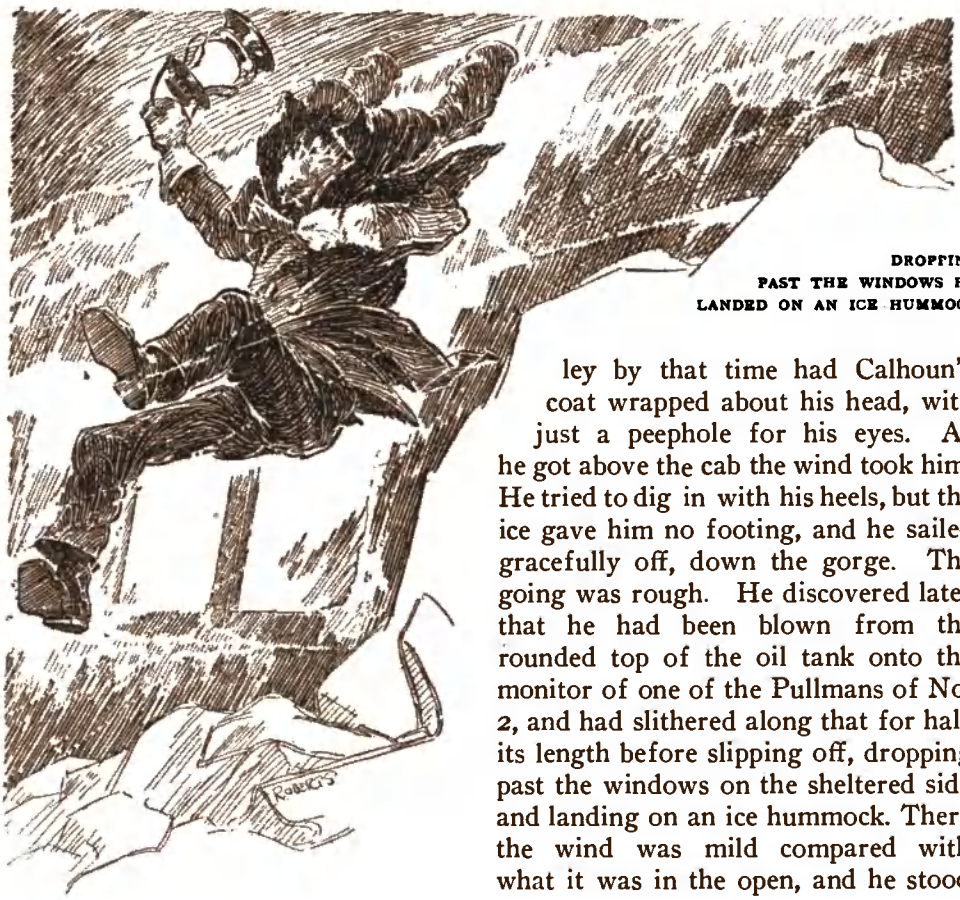
"Not a damn bit. Better have your fireman shut off the fuel-oil feed, or we'll be havin' a blaze here."

The fireman came to life, fought with the torn storm curtain, won over it, got to the oil valves and turned them down. Then he looked up at Shackley.

"Like it up there, old-timer?" he asked with a grin. "Come on down."

Bob swore as he realized that he was still hanging ludicrously to the frozen whistle lever. He let himself down to the gangway.

"You boys stay here," he said. "No use of all of us freezing to death. This here ought to be part of No. 2." He pointed to the steel Pullman at his side of the cab. "I'm goin' to see what she's doin' on our track."



DROPPING PAST THE WINDOWS HE LANDED ON AN ICE HUMMOCK

He ducked under the remains of the storm curtain, wiggled his way up over the tender, and the full blast of the gale struck him as soon as he poked his head into the clear. Without any conscious volition, he let go his holds and slid back into the cab.

"Cripes, it's cold up there," he said. "Ice. I'll bet that wind is blowin' better'n seventy miles. Listen, gimme your coat, an' I'll wrap it round my head. Gimme lantern—got a oil lamp, or only these new-fangled 'lectric ones. I remember when— Never mind. Got an oil lantern?"

The fireman dug one out of his locker in the tender and lighted it. Shackley by that time had Calhoun's coat wrapped about his head, with just a peephole for his eyes. As he got above the cab the wind took him. He tried to dig in with his heels, but the ice gave him no footing, and he sailed gracefully off, down the gorge. The going was rough. He discovered later that he had been blown from the rounded top of the oil tank onto the monitor of one of the Pullmans of No. 2, and had slithered along that for half its length before slipping off, dropping past the windows on the sheltered side and landing on an ice hummock. There the wind was mild compared with what it was in the open, and he stood up.

There was a shout, which he dully heard, and a light was waved. He saw it, made his way toward it, falling half a dozen times, and was dragged into the vestibule of one of the Pullmans and the door banged behind him. He unwrapped the coat from about his head.

V

"WELL, how in the—" said a voice, and he recognized Dad Peterson, con-

ductor of No. 2. "Bob Shackley! How'd you get here?"

Shackley had to wiggle his face and jaw before he could speak. He felt something wet on his cheek, then, and reached up to brush it off. It was the end of an icicle firmly rooted in his eyebrow, so he decided not to brush it off just then.

"Come out on No. 4," he answered. "We had the west-bound track clear. What'd you climb over on it for? Now we're all jammed up."

Peterson shook his head. "Great Jupiter, Bob, was that it? I thought it was a relief train. 'Bout a million tons of ice on the gorge wall let go an' come down on us. There ain't no front end at all. I don't know what's happened up there. I was in the diner, gettin' some hot coffee, when I heard the roar. Then we just buckled up. I went for'ard as far as I could; and that was into the combination car. The front end of that is all ice an' rocks. Half the car's buried, an' all you can see ahead is just ice. It's over both tracks, over the whole right of way, out into the river."

"You got steam heat!" exclaimed Shackley.

Peterson nodded. "A little. I don't understand it. No pressure, though. Must still be steam in the boiler. I'm keepin' all the doors shut to save what heat we got. They ought to send us a relief train. They must have known we—"

"No wire," said Shackley, deeming it wiser to conceal the truth. "Well, I guess I must have climbed onto the outside of the slide, then. The 5002 don't seem to be hurt much, except she's up in the air and half her cab's gone. Maybe we can give you heat if yours gives out. Don't look like we could do much else, though. Say, where are we at? I was tryin' to see when I looked up ahead an' see myself bearin' down on your rear end. In the murk I thought the red light was on the west-bound track."

"It was, Bob—was on the west-bound track. You see, I'd figgered they'd send a relief train, so I had the boys build a wind-break on the west-bound track, an' I put some lanterns in it. Built the wind-break out of orange crates and stuff from the diner, an' what we could tear out of the closets—cupboard doors and things like that. I guess you didn't see our rear end lights at all. As to where we are, we're at Indian Falls. You know that sheer wall of rock just east of them? Well, it was off that that the ice come. Must have jarred it down on us."

Shackley visioned the place. The basalt side of the gorge there rose for a sheer thousand feet, almost over the tracks. Indian Falls was a curiosity; a cleft in the gorge wall, into which a cataract tumbled. Summer time they ran excursions to it. It was five miles from the head of the gorge, and there was not a settlement or a farmhouse in the entire distance. And all wires were down, and a bitterly frigid wind was sweeping down the gorge over every one of those five miles. Nobody would dare come down from the east end, of course, because they had been notified that No. 2 was coming through on one track and No. 4 on the other. Besides, if the ice had fallen from the gorge walls here, there was no telling what it had done beyond. Or what it might do behind them. Another slide like that and they would be well trapped.

Bob Shackley was an old style railroader. He accepted things as they happened and wasted no time crying

over spilled milk. These two trains were jammed up; they were now iced in, besides. There was no use worrying about the trains any more; the thing to do was to get relief. And to get relief meant getting word out. Five miles in a seventy-mile wind and killing cold. It couldn't be done. Yet—

Dad Peterson knew of what Shackley was thinking. He slowly shook his head.

"Can't be done, Bob," he said. "We just got to sit here an' wait. Likely no more ice will come down off the cliffs, not here anyway. If it does, we simply got to pray. These Pullmans have all-steel roofs, too. We got to take the chance. Ned Weston, he tried to get over the slide so as to make it through to the east end of the gorge, but the wind blew him off the ice and into the river. We got him out, but that's all; he's in an empty berth in one of the Pullmans now."

Shackley apparently didn't hear him. "You got any rope aboard?" he asked.

Peterson, knowing it was useless to protest, did the next best thing: offered to help Shackley in his madness. "No rope, Bob; but there's maybe seven hundred feet o' bell-cord in—"

"Bell-cord 'd be better than rope, at that," cut in Shackley. "Lighter. Listen! Any of your passengers got heavy clothes, do you think?"

Dad Peterson's eyes grew moist. "Bob, you old fool," he said, "you ain't aimin' to— Yes, damn it, as luck 'd have it, there's a travelin' man in car 9 who's handlin' a line of underwear; he was showin' me his samples."

Bob Shackley smiled triumphantly. "Funny how things break, Dad," he said. "They always do break good for me. Why, I remember when, one year— Car 9, you say? That 'd be up ahead. Listen, you tear off about three car-lengths of that bell-cord, and then come up to the men's room in car 9."

When Peterson got to the compartment at the end of car 9 he found a little group of serious-faced men, some sitting on the settee, some standing next the partition, while in the center of the room Shackley was carefully preparing himself for what he felt he had to do. The underwear salesman had obliged with two heavy union suits, and by great good luck another passenger, returning late from a mountain vacation, had a pair of high-top boots with calked soles.

"Hell, this ain't nothin'," Shackley was saying as Peterson entered with the coiled bell rope. "Why, gentlemen, I remember when, back when this line was first shoved through the gorge, there was a train caught in here for fourteen days. Things wasn't modern then; old coaches with open platforms and little engines. Steam heat wasn't much good when the engine was pulling hard, 'n' they had coal stoves in the coaches. Run out o' coal, o' course, an' so all the passengers moved out o' the last car an' the crew begun to chop that up for fuel. Hell of a mess when we got to 'em with the wrecker; they had this last car so chopped up there was nothin' we could get a hold of to yank it off'n the track!"

He looked up and his eyes spotted Peterson, and he winked prodigiously.

"Don't you worry none, folks," he continued. "I'll be through the gorge in no time, once I get over that slide. Why, I been out in lots worse than this— I remember when, one time, I was pullin' freight through here, an' it was so cold that the shacks—that's the brakemen—froze their feet to the top

o' the cars as they tried to run along. Yes, sir, we hauled 'em down out of the gorge with three shacks froze right to the top o' the cars."

He had completed his dressing then, and, carrying the extra coat to wrap about his head later, he motioned to Peterson and moved out into the vestibule. Taking the bell-cord, he tied one end about his waist and passed the coils back to the conductor.

"Listen, Dad," he said. "I'll tell yuh how we'll do it. There's no use two of us freezin'. We'll go up to the vestibule o' the combination, and there I'll climb out. You stay inside, with the door open just a pinch, and pay out that cord. I only want it in case I slip goin' over the slide, but with these calks on I don't reckon I'll slip. You pay out the cord. Just before you get to the end, you give three jerks, to let me know I'm at the end of my rope. If I can see the other side of the slide, then, I'll cast off and give you three jerks—and then you pull in your old bell-cord. You'll know I'm on my way. Goin' over the slide is goin' to be the only tough place."

Peterson put a hand on Shackley's shoulder. "Bob, you old fool," he said, "it ain't your job to try this. I got another shack—"

"Keep him to kid the passengers with," interrupted Bob. "I know it ain't my job. But I'm off my train, an' I might as well be doin' this as tryin' to get back onto it. By 'n' by maybe some of the boys from the No. 4 will come over. If they do, make 'em help you get steam from the 5002. Well, so long."

He wrapped the extra coat about his head, adjusting the collar opening to afford him a peephole for vision, slapped old Dad Peterson on the shoulder, opened the vestibule door and stepped out. Peterson stood there dumbly for a moment, watching the bell-cord slowly pay out from the coils he held in his hand. Then he pushed the door nearly shut and waited. For a long time the bell-cord payed out slowly but steadily. Two car-lengths of it, about 160 feet, were gone. Then the thin braided wire and cotton line lay still for a while—then suddenly whizzed out, twanging against the door jamb with a rasping note. Peterson dropped the coils and took a double turn with the end about the brake lever, and waited, sweat pouring over his forehead. With bulging eyes he watched the cord uncoil from where it had fallen on the floor and whisk out of sight through the doorway. He could count the coils now—six only lay on the floor—and even as he looked the braided cord flew out into the night. Only two coils remained, only one—the line tautened against the brake lever and then fell suddenly slack.

Peterson heaved a great sobbing sigh, bent over and gently picked up the slack line. Very gently he pulled it toward him, his fingers sensitive for the slightest resistance. There was none. Six inches, a foot, two feet, he pulled the line in—and it came with scarcely any drag at all, slipping over the ice. Old Dad dropped the line and sank to the platform, shivering in the cold and sobbing. Then, after a couple of minutes, he roused himself and began to pull in the bell-cord. Hand over hand, he hauled in the slack of the line, with scarcely any effort, so little resistance did the slick surface of the ice offer. One car-length he coiled, then the second car-length, then more slowly he pulled in the last length. His hands moved with less and less speed as he drew near what he knew was the

end—and with a little slithering click it came in through the door suddenly.

Peterson kicked the door shut, bent over, and picked up the end of the bell-cord—looked at it—blinked his eyes—brushed the end with the palm of his hand—rubbed his eyes—held the end up close to the vestibule light and stared at it. It was cut—cut clean with a knife, and not frayed as from a break!

The blood surged through Dad Peterson's body, and a warm sweat broke out on his face. He drew a deep breath, and sighed happily. Good old Bob. He must have started slipping down the farther side of the slide, not toward the river, but toward the right of way. He had seen he was safe, for the time being at least, and, not wanting the jerk of the rope to slue or throw him from his course, he had slashed himself clear with his knife. Well, it was a good augury—maybe Bob would make it!

He picked up the coiled bell-cord and slowly moved back into the first car. The passengers crowded forward and about him, asking questions.

"He's over the slide—that's all I know. If anybody can make it, he will. He's the toughest man in the world. But he's got an awful fight before him."

East of the gorge the roundabout wires were fairly burning and sizzling with messages to and fro. No. 2 not yet heard from—No. 4 not reported. How was the weather? Not moderating a bit. Well, do something. No. 2 might have piled up, but Shackley was on No. 4, and Shackley always got through. For Cripe's sake do something, only be careful. Get a gang together of some kind and work down on the east-bound track. Leave the west-bound line clear, Shackley may break through at any minute. Get out there, do something. There's a train full of passengers in there, and on the other track there's Shackley and No. 4.

But what to do? Finally they got a handcar and boxed it in against the weather. Boxed it and cross-braced it. Got an old oil headlight and fitted it on the front end, sheltered from the storm. A volunteer crew: Tim Murphy, veteran boss of the section gang; Larry Evans, the station agent; Ginger Preston, red-headed fireman from No. 547, the way freight; Cy Waring, retired river pilot, an arch-enemy of the railroad that had ruined his business. Just the four of them, on a handcar over which a packing case had been lowered and cleated down, giving them barely room to work the levers as they stooped inside.

Slowly they moved off down the line, against east-bound traffic—against the No. 2 if she was to come through. The wind behind them, they had to hold the car down to keep it from rushing along the line to possible destruction. A peephole either side of the headlight gave them vision ahead into the raving night; a braced door at one side was the only chance of escape if something came zooming up the line. Slowly they dropped down the grade, holding her against the grip of the wind, peering into the dull, white, swirling night.

One mile they went, and saw nothing. Two miles—and a weird prelight from a dun-colored dawn that was coming illumined the scene of terror all around. To the right a wind-whipped river, filled with tossing blocks of mush ice; to the left shimmering and terrible and ghastly smooth walls of curved ice shrouding the cañon wall. The rails gleamed black and orange ahead of them, filmed

with ice, but because they were so near the ground, not coated as heavily as surfaces that gave resistance to the wind. The handcar rolled and pitched and jarred and groaned, and slowly moved on down the grade. Inside, four men with aching backs fought the bobbing levers, to keep their uncouth vehicle from gaining too much headway and being bounced from the precarious steel. If it ever got off the track they could never get it on again.

Three miles—the murk was now of the consistency of milky water, with the growing light in the sky. The headlight cast a sickly beam ahead, in which swirled clouds of almost impalpable ice needles. From time to time Murphy or Preston, on the front end, turned a head to peek out. Ice, terrible ice, locking everything in its grip, was all they saw.

Three miles and a quarter—and Murphy, peeking out, suddenly shouted:

"Hold her! Hold her hard! There's something! *It's a man!*"

Four backs braced like steel arches, and the bobbing levers were held steady, still, horizontal. The handcar slid and jolted, then stopped. Tim Murphy was fighting with the braced door; heaved his mighty shoulders against it, and burst it open through its coating of ice. He tumbled out, sprawled on the treacherous footing; found his feet, jammed a wooden trig under the wheels of the handcar, and plunged round in front of it. On top of him, and walking like a drunken man, his feet flying in all directions on the ice, came Cy Waring, the old river pilot. He was shouting curses in his deep bass voice; sizzling bursts of profanity that were hot enough to almost melt the ice from the cliff walls.

Into them bumped an ice-clad figure. A great helmet of ice covered its head; cracked sheets of ice covered its legs; its chest was a mass of congealed white. Its arms, cased in tubes of driven spume, waved outlandishly, cracking at the shoulders, where the frozen film was broken. They tried to grasp this strange figure, but their gloved hands slipped from its slick surface. Preston and Evans, fighting for a footing, joined them, and they surrounded the weird and animated form of ice. It seemed to be fighting them off; it was doggedly plodding ahead. It butted Preston and sent him sprawling into the congealed hollow that was the ice-filled gutter beside the right of way. But the other three surrounded it, battled with it, dragged it to the handcar; battered it, pounded it, finally got it in the shelter of the packing case.

Preston, gathering himself together and returning, found a flash light in his clothes, and in its white rays they beat at the thing's ice head, broke the two inch thick semitransparent film, and bent and pried the stiff leather back, revealing a set, white, drawn face.

"Holy mother of God," breathed Tim Murphy, in an awed whisper, "it's Bob Shackley!"

The set lips in the pallid face moved, and they strained forward to catch the words.

"No. 2—No. 4—piled—piled up—Indian Falls—I—I remember when—"

"Indian Falls," rumbled Cy Waring, the old pilot. "God! He's walked through this better'n two miles! Come on, boys, no time to wait here. Shove him in the corner there. We've got to pump this square nosed craft back, and pump her quick."

The rest was very simple, if you would call it so. Four men in a boxed

in handcar fighting, inch by inch, against a driving, ice laden wind, to force their clumsy vehicle up the line to the station at the eastern end of the gorge. Only three and a quarter miles. They made it—in two hours. Sometimes they got out and pushed with their great shoulders, but most of the time they pumped, paying out years of their lives in the effort. But they made it. The wires carried the news by roundabout ways. The wrecker from Mountmere came roaring down with the gale, and behind it a hospital train, to relieve the stranded passengers.

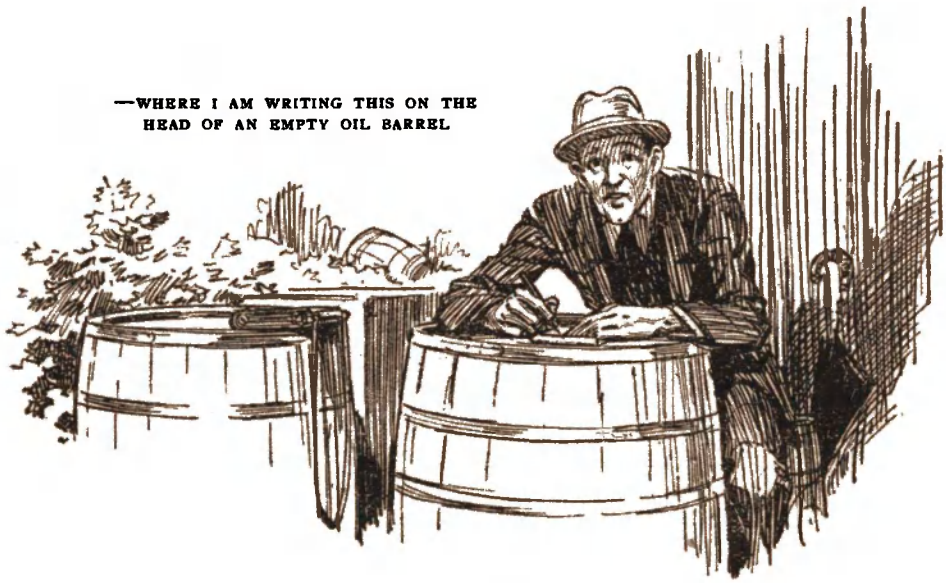
Men who were capable of miracles—just railroaders—cut a trail over the slide and, one by one, guided the passengers over it to the relief train. Men capable of miracles, just the wrecking crew—mined and sapped and struggled with the icy slide for two days, and got the line cleared. They got the 5002 on her feet and warmed up, and No. 4, the mail, came through. Then they dragged what was left of the No. 2 through; with boxes on a flatcar at its head holding all that remained of those who had met a merciful end when tons and tons and tons of ice jarred loose from the gorge wall and ended the fight No. 2 was making to keep her schedule.

And weeks afterward, when traffic was running smoothly again, enginemen gathering in the locker room back of the roundhouse, saw a new notice on the bulletin board. They read it—read it often—and turned away with moist eyes:

> Robert Shackley, former traveling engineer of this division, is hereby appointed assistant master mechanic. Mr. Shackley has left the hospital, and has gone on leave of three months at full pay. Due to changes in operation, there will be nobody appointed as traveling engineer in his place, but Mr. Shackley, in his new duties, will include in his work general supervision of operating details. The company offered Mr. Shackley retirement at full pay as a slight recompense for his courageous action and bravery beyond the call of duty, but he refused the offer. His reply is deemed worthy of inclusion in this notice. He said:
>
> "Retire? I'm still able to work. Why, I can remember when there weren't no pensions, and when a railroader didn't retire till they nailed him in a box and put him underground."

ELECTRIC ARC WELDING LENGTHENS RAIL "LIFE," MAKES SMOOTHER TRAVELING

SUCCESSFUL tests are announced by the Canadian Pacific Railway of a method for increasing the smoothness of railway travel and for lengthening the "life" of the rails. By the method the dips or hollows at the points where the rails connect are fused by electric arc welding. This melts the rail to a depth of one-eighth inch and fuses thereon a deposit of 5 per cent nickel steel, which is nearly 50 per cent harder than the rail itself.



—WHERE I AM WRITING THIS ON THE HEAD OF AN EMPTY OIL BARREL

Bigger and Better Claims

Baltimore Blizzard Braves the Hazards of a Woman's Temper to Side-step Fraud and Its Sweeping Claims

By Don Livingston

Oil Belt and Western Railroad Co.
Castle Rock, Ark., June 26th, 1929.
File PI — 98627-18
Butts vs. Company.
Mr. A. Z. Pruitt, Claim Agent,
O. B. & W. Railroad,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:

I HAVE your letter of June 24th instructing that I investigate and handle for compromise settlement, the claim of Miss Celia Butts *versus* the company, amount $30,000.00, covering alleged personal injuries to Miss Butts while a passenger on our lines. It pleases me to advise that I am already on the job, and that all indications point to one of the most perplexing and interesting cases of my entire career.

Knowing me as you do, Mr. Pruitt, you will not be unduly surprised when I assert that I expect not merely to make a compromise settlement with the claimant; but much better still, I expect to have her withdraw the claim entirely, thereby saving the company the sum of $30,000 plus court costs, and incidentally proving the value of a wide-awake claim investigator like myself.

I know that you are anxious to hear how I got at the bottom of things so quickly, and how I expect to accomplish the foregoing; so if you will follow me closely I shall explain it all in my usual brief and succinct manner.

You will recall that it is alleged that

Miss Butts, a fare paying passenger on our train No. 11 on the date of June 17th, while alighting from the passenger coach at the Castle Rock station, was thrown violently against the car steps when the platform stool turned under her feet. It is alleged that, owing to the flagrant negligence of the company's employees, Miss Butts's left leg was badly injured, resulting in paralysis and the total loss of the use of that limb, wherefore suit for the payment of $30,000 has been filed by the claimant's attorneys, Wallett and Wallett.

I pause here to remark that should this case come to trial we would have the claim to pay. A railroad has almost no chance of obtaining a fair and impartial verdict in a personal injury case tried before a jury, as you well know, Mr. Pruitt. With all respect for our courts, we have to admit that in the mind of the average juryman there lurks an unconscious prejudice against railroads which leans his sympathies toward the plaintiff.

So I came to Castle Rock fully expecting to try for the best compromise settlement I could get, just as you had instructed me, Mr. Pruitt. But already my investigation has convinced me that Miss Butts's leg is not paralyzed nor even seriously injured, but that it is sound, serviceable, and intact, and as wholly capable of performing its various functions as its mate. This being so, it follows that the claim is based upon a fraud, and should not be allowed.

You will readily recognize one difficulty which we face, however, viz.: proving the fact that the plaintiff's leg is sound and serviceable, a task made more difficult by the fact that she has depositions from a host of prominent doctors and specialists that she is suffering from paralysis of the left leg. And in order that you may be fully informed on the status of the case, I shall relate exactly what has happened since I reached Castle Rock.

My train arrived here at 9.45 last night. It was inky dark and drizzling rain. I mention these apparently insignificant facts because they have an important bearing on what followed after. I always try to be clear and lucid in my reports to you, Mr. Pruitt, as you have no doubt noticed.

The operator at the station pointed out to me the light of a rooming house some two blocks away. I immediately set out for it. The sidewalks in Castle Rock are deplorable. However, pressing resolutely ahead I would have arrived safely enough had I not unfortunately stepped off the narrow walk in the darkness and plunged face downward into a muddy stream of water. I couldn't see the mud; but the condition of my person later verified my suspicion that it was muddy. I didn't like that a little bit; but I proceeded on to the rooming house and rang the bell in the office, dripping though I was.

The landlady soon entered and looked me over so coldly that I felt positively ill at ease. I explained briefly that my bedraggled appearance was not customary but was the unhappy result of an accident, but the lady appeared doubtful. She informed me that she had one room available, but it would be necessary that I pay in advance. I didn't like that a little bit, Mr. Pruitt. Even if I was soaked and muddy, I was representing the O. B. & W. Railroad and am a gentleman; so with considerable dignity I informed the lady that I represent a several-million dollar concern that could buy out the whole town of Castle Rock without missing it, and that she need not

worry about her rent. After that she became apologetic and respectful, and showed me to a room on the ground floor. Follow me closely, Mr. Pruitt, for it all has a bearing on what happened later. Please notice especially that I did not tell the landlady that I am a millionaire, nor that I am going to buy the town of Castle Rock or any part of it. I merely tried to impress on her that I am good for my room rent, and if she misunderstood my meaning, why, whose fault is it, Mr. Pruitt?

I took a bath and went immediately to bed. Here I must pause to remark that two or three times before falling asleep, I heard somebody walking about in the adjoining room. Of course, I thought nothing about it at the time; but that observation is of utmost importance to us.

As I was dressing this morning, I again heard the sound of footfalls in the adjoining room. I distinctly caught the sound, for the partition is quite thin and there could be no mistake. Later I heard something that sounded like somebody rolling a hoop over the floor, though of course I thought nothing of it at the time.

In the dining room the landlady, Mrs. Elkins—for that is her name—greeted me quite warmly, a decided change since her first greeting last night. I have learned since that she has started the report that I am a millionaire manufacturer who wants to buy the whole town of Castle Rock for a factory site or something. I ask you to witness that I am totally innocent of such gross misrepresentation. I did tell Mrs. Elkins that I represent a several million dollar concern that could buy out Castle Rock; but I didn't say a word about buying it. I was merely seeking to impress her with the fact that I may be trusted for my room rent.

There was only one other guest present in the dining room, probably because people in Castle Rock have breakfast at a very early hour. This other guest was a lady in a wheel chair who was eating a half portion of a grapefruit. Mrs. Elkins introduced me to her. Imagine my surprise, Mr. Pruitt, at learning that she is Miss Butts, the claimant I came to see!

Miss Butts is a capable looking lady of about forty years. She did not tell me her age, in fact the question of age was not mentioned; I merely observed that she is about forty. She has very penetrating dark eyes, a long sharp nose, and a wide firm mouth that is habitually shut very tight. She also is widely traveled and experienced, having been the advance agent for a Chatauqua concern. I gather that she is a person of ability and determination. However, she is a pleasing conversationalist, and she was most agreeable to me. Mrs. Elkins, also, is quite talkative. She explained about Miss Butts's sad accident, and that Miss Butts is not a native of Castle Rock, but is only vacationing here.

"Miss Butts likes the bracing air and the rugged scenery of the Ozarks," she informed me. "She has room number eight, next to yours, Mr. Blizzard."

Right there I picked up my ears, so to speak, Mr. Pruitt, because room number eight is the one in which I heard somebody walking. It is Miss Butts's room, therefore Miss Butts was walking about in the secrecy of her room. You see the logic of my deduction, Mr. Pruitt. If Miss Butts can walk inside her room she can walk any place else; her leg is not paralyzed, and her claim is a fraud.

It was that chair that had made the sound like the rolling of a hoop when she rolled herself out to the dining room. But she is faking the paralysis to extort money from the company. Immediately I perceived that my mission was to follow up this lead and prove that Miss Butts's left leg is not paralyzed, thereby leaving her without a leg to stand on in court.

I am not a suspicious person, Mr. Pruitt; but I have met such fakers before, and they can't fool me. They make me quite warm under the collar. Such unscrupulous persons who magnify some petty loss or injury in the hope of reaping a golden harvest from the helpless railroad. It goes to show the value of an alert and tactful claim adjuster, Mr. Pruitt. Here I am going to save the company the sum of $30,000 plus court costs; for if I had not discovered this fraud, they would have it to pay.

After breakfast I talked with Miss Butts in the parlor for some time. She is quite interested in me, believing me to be a millionaire manufacturer or something. Of course, you may judge for yourself whether I look the part, Mr. Pruitt. My modesty forbids my discussing so personal a subject. With an eye for an opening, I mentioned her injury quite tactfully.

"Of course you will recover as soon as the effects of the shock wear off," I remarked.

Miss Butts dabbed her kerchief to her eyes.

"No, Mr. Blizzard. Hope struggles in my bosom more feebly every day. The best doctors in the country have examined, consulted, discussed, and X-rayed; but they don't seem able to determine the exact cause. They offer me no hope."

There you are, Mr. Pruitt! She'd play that sob stuff on a jury, and those twelve gentlemen would forget that we had a lawyer in the room. But don't worry, Mr. Pruitt. Blizzard is on the job.

After talking with Miss Butts for some time, I graciously excused myself on the pretense of an engagement and hurried to the Oasis Filling Station, where I am writing this on the head of an empty oil barrel. After mailing this I shall seclude myself in the growth of persimmon trees which I see below the blacksmith shop, and there I shall form my plans for proving that Miss Butts can walk, that both her legs are in a healthy, normal condition, that her claim is a fraud, and that we are prepared to fight the case to the highest court in the land.

Of course, many obstacles present themselves to a gentleman such as myself who is obliged to investigate the condition of a lady's leg, especially a lady of Miss Butts's type. There is a species of females rather indefinitely known as flappers who leave very little to the imagination when it comes to a question of anatomy; but Miss Butts is not a flapper. You may expect another letter to-morrow.

Yours truly,
BALTIMORE BLIZZARD,
Claim Adjuster, O. B. & W. Ry.

Oil Belt and Western Railroad Co.
Castle Rock, Ark., June 27th, 1929.
File PI—98627-18.
Butts vs. Company.

Mr. A. Z. Pruitt, C. A.,
O. B. & W. Ry.,
St. Louis, Mo.

Since writing to you yesterday, new and serious complications piled up in the effort to prevent me from carrying our point, viz.: proving that Miss Butts's legs are uninjured and that she

is faking her claim. But I always carry on, Mr. Pruitt, in spite of hazards, handicaps, and what-not. Although I haven't proved anything yet, I am sure you will be pleased with the competent manner in which I have overcome some gigantic obstacles and have cleared the way for a sweeping victory to-morrow.

Down in the persimmon patch I conceived a plan and worked out all the details very carefully. It is a straight from the shoulder campaign such as I delight in, Mr. Pruitt. It will require grim courage and great finesse; but Blizzard will put it over, don't worry. I shall not tax your mind with the details of the plan, as you will be able to see them as they unfold.

Here I merely pause to remark that the first important step was to get Miss Butts to go riding with me into the mountains. There, under influences quite different from those at the boarding house, I expected her to forget the rôle she is playing, at least momentarily forget it; and in that crucial moment I shall obtain proof that she is faking. Once the proof is in our possession I shall force her to withdraw the claim, and the company will have made $30,000 by having me on the payroll.

I returned to the rooming house and, fortunately, found Miss Butts in the parlor alone in her wheel chair. She had put on a different dress, a flimsy, low-neck one, and had fixed up with considerable powder and rouge since I left this morning. Something in her attitude led me to believe that she was waiting for me to return. Of course, my modesty requires me to ascribe any interest she may feel in me to the mistaken idea that I am a millionaire, as it is natural that a millionaire would hold a degree of attraction for any unmarried lady.

The conversation was brisk from the start. I had just finished picturing the beauties of the Ozark drives since the recent rains and was all ready to ask about the all-important drive when the first interruption arrived. It was two neighbor ladies, Mrs. Yates and Miss Larsen, who had come with sweet peas and sympathizing faces to cheer Miss Butts in her affliction. Mrs. Yates immediately began cheering her with an account of the suffering of her husband's uncle, who was bedfast from a stroke for eighteen years before he died. Miss Larsen added to the cheer by relating how her dearest chum has a friend who is paralyzed in the left side, and lives in momentary expectation of passing into glory when the ailment reaches his heart.

I could see that Miss Butts was not greatly appreciative of their efforts, and fearing that they might prolong their visit and entirely spoil this opportunity to invite Miss Butts for the ride, I broke into the lamentation with an amusing story, then quickly followed it with two more that were really funny. The two visitors were so shocked to know that anything akin to hilarity should be permitted in the presence of an ailing one that they immediately took their departure.

Then and there I suggested to Miss Butts that a ride over the mountain roads would be highly beneficial to her, and that I would be delighted to take her to-morrow. But at that juncture another interruption intruded. A man without anything particularly striking about his appearance stepped into the parlor, and Miss Butts immediately introduced me to her attorney, Mr. Wallett.

Mr. Wallett is about medium height, rather slender, has heavy dark brows and receding features. He looked me

over very carefully. Something told me that he was suspicious of me and that this was to be a closed session, so I excused myself and strolled out on the porch. From there I could hear the mumble of their voices in the parlor, but being a gentleman I made no effort to overhear what was being said. However, I could not help hearing the lawyer when he raised his voice in consternation and emphasis.

"What?" I heard him exclaim. "You go riding with that dough-face! I guess not. How do you know but what—"

I lost the rest of it, but I had heard enough. It was only logical to deduce that he was talking about me, and I did not like it a little bit; in fact I fairly bristled, but I held myself in check. After all, what is the opinion of a shark lawyer? Following that they talked for some time in subdued tones. I had a feeling that I was the subject of the discussion. No doubt he was warning Miss Butts against me, and cautioning her to stay away from me.

As he left the house he gave me a nasty look, that I returned tit for tat. I see plainly that Wallett is the greatest obstacle that I shall have to overcome. It is plain that there exists between him and Miss Butts a conspiracy to defraud the company of $30,000, a crime which is punishable by heavy penalty in our courts. And I here pause to remark that such shark lawyers are a disgrace to a gifted and honorable profession and should be debarred. And I shall see that he is, Mr. Pruitt. I intend to expose him to the bar association, besides having the company prosecute him and Miss Butts for conspiracy to defraud.

Miss Butts was quite flustered when I returned to the parlor, naturally; but I easily started the conversation and, of course, brought up the proposed drive again, and insisted that we go out early next morning.

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Blizzard," she lamented, "but a most pressing business engagement makes it impossible. I'm so disappointed."

"I am even more so," I assured her. "I had counted big on that ride. You know, busy men like me have so few real pleasures."

"Perhaps later," she agreed hopefully. "That is, if you stay here any length of time, Mr. Blizzard."

"My time is limited," I told her. "And it grieves me to go without the pleasure of sharing with you the beauties of the Ozark drives. And you need the recreation, Miss Butts. Think of your own health and pleasure. After all is said and done, nature is the only doctor. What you need now is a change and a cheerful frame of mind such as may be induced by the song of birds and the smell of wild flowers and the sight of wooded hills. It is unjust and cruel that a young woman of charm and beauty should be deprived of the vitalizing outdoors. (Notice I did not say that Miss Butts is either charming or beautiful; I merely drew on a hypothetical case for effect.)

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Blizzard," she said, almost sniffing, and I know she meant it. It means a lot in an old maid's life to go riding with a supposed millionaire.

"The early morning air is the freshest," I continued. "We'll take an early spin and be back before Mr. Wal—er—before time for your engagement."

"You tempt me!" cried Miss Butts with maidenly coyness. "Mr. Blizzard, you shouldn't do that."

So at length, with a great deal of hesitancy which I know was induced by fear of that smart aleck of a lawyer,

Miss Butts agreed to go driving with me to-morrow morning, with the understanding that we get back by eleven o'clock.

So now the stage is all set. To-morrow I expose the fraud. And it will be a great pleasure to me, Mr. Pruitt, to snap my fingers under the nose of that smart lawyer. He will think twice before he calls me names again.

I know that you are watching this case with great interest and anxiety, so to-morrow I shall write telling you how I accomplished the difficult task of proving that Miss Butts's leg is all right. I assure you that it shall be done in a perfectly gentlemanly and proper manner; though of course you have every confidence in me, Mr. Pruitt.

Yours for Claim Prevention,
BALTIMORE BLIZZARD,
Claim Adjuster.

Oil Belt and Western Railroad Co.
Railroad Telegram—Be Brief.
From Castle Rock, Arkansas, 4:15 P.M., June 27th, 1929.
To A. Z. PRUITT, C. A., St. Louis, Mo.

Please furnish bond for two thousand dollars quick to get me out of jail. Am explaining all by letter.

BALTIMORE BLIZZARD.

Oil Belt and Western Railroad Co.
Railroad Telegram—Be Brief.
From St. Louis, Mo. 10:10 A.M., June 28th, 1929.
To BALTIMORE BLIZZARD, care of jail, Castle Rock, Ark.

Have just received papers in new suit filed by Miss Butts, amount $60,000, charging mental anguish. What is wrong? Instead of disposing of our claim, you have doubled it. Explain.

A. Z. PRUITT,
Claim Agent.

Oil Belt and Western Railroad Co.
Castle Rock, Ark., June 28th, 1929.
Mr. A. Z. PRUITT, Claim Agent,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:

I don't see why you did not state in your telegram that you are arranging bond to get me out of jail. If you never were in jail, you have no idea how humiliating and disagreeable it is, even if you are guilty of no wrong; and my mind would be so much easier to know that arrangements for my release are being rushed. I don't like it here a little bit.

However, even prison bars will not prevent me discharging the duties which are mine toward the company, and I shall make full and complete report of the latest developments in the case of Butts *vs.* Company, even if I do have to use my brief case for a writing desk.

You ask what is wrong? I would much prefer to wire you the details, so that you might have them at hand immediately; but I fear they are too long and in some ways too intimate to be handled successfully by wire. I know that when you read the following you will be pleased with the manner in which I have handled the case; and you will readily see that it is only mad jealousy on the part of that smart aleck lawyer Wallett that is responsible for my imprisonment and the filing of the mental anguish suit for $60,000. It is absurd, Mr. Pruitt. I don't like it a little bit. I pause here to remark that Wallett is so obstinate that he doesn't know when he is whipped, and that he is going to feel the weight of my hand before this outrage is settled.

In order that you may understand exactly how matters stand I shall relate to you in my usual brief and succinct manner all that has happened

since my last letter. Please follow me closely, Mr. Pruitt, so that you may see that the charge against me, viz., disorderly conduct and trifling with a lady's affections, is unjust, preposterous and the outgrowth of bitter jealousy caused by my besting Wallett in the original suit. I shall be most happy to land that rascal behind the bars, where he belongs, Mr. Pruitt.

Miss Butts and I started riding in a hired car at eight thirty yesterday morning. I carried my kodak, which is always an important part of my equipment. Miss Butts was quite jolly. I am sure that she was delighted to escape from the prison walls of the boarding house. I forgot to state that Mrs. Elkins and I lifted her from the wheel chair and loaded her into the car. However, beneath her exterior of joviality I could perceive a trace of uneasiness, and I knew that she was very anxious that Lawyer Wallett should not know of the escapade.

At some distance from town I stopped beside the road, in a particularly attractive spot where there is a grove of trees at the foot of a waterfall. It was an ideal spot for the accomplishment of my purpose, viz., to get Miss Butts momentarily to forget that she was faking a paralyzed leg and in that moment of forgetfulness to use that leg as nature intended. You see, if we could prove that she did use it, we could easily beat the case. That's only a logical deduction.

I got out of the car and gathered some wild flowers, while Miss Butts cooed about the rippling water and the singing birds. I spoke of the joys of the barefoot boy who is privileged to wade unabashed in the cooling water. Miss Butts sniffed and dabbed her kerchief to her eyes.

"Just to think, Mr. Blizzard, that I shall never be able to walk again!" she sobbed.

"Oh, yes, you will," I told her cheerfully. "You'll recover right away. You know, Miss Butts, I have hopes that you will recover just any time." (A fact, Mr. Pruitt; I intended to see that she did.)

"You are so cheering, Mr. Blizzard. You make me feel really hopeful," said Miss Butts, looking soulfully into my eyes. Remember, she thought me to be a millionaire—but through no fault of mine.

"That's the way to look at it," I encouraged her. "Now that we are all by ourselves, let's forget the worries and anxieties that habitually harass us and surrender ourselves to the soothing, benign influences of our inspiring surroundings. The water is cool and the shade inviting, and I am going to carry you to yonder rock shelf, where you may sit and dabble in the brook while I gather more daisies from the dell."

"I really shouldn't allow you," Miss Butts objected, blushing real maidenly. "I never was carried by a man."

"There has to be a first time," I assured her. I believe in taking a goat by the horns and driving a bargain while the iron is hot, Mr. Pruitt.

So I carried Miss Butts to the rock shelf. Her weight is really surprising; but as I keep myself physically fit by setting-up exercises both night and morning, I accomplished the task without mishap. She let her arm rest tightly about my neck, but I pretended not to notice. And in view of the ridiculous charges made against me, I ask you to note carefully that there was nothing indiscreet in my conduct.

Seated on the rock shelf, Miss Butts ran her fingers through the clear, cool water of the stream, while I discoursed

in my cheery manner on the glory and extravagance of nature as it was spread around us. My object, as you will no doubt guess, was to lead Miss Butts's mind away from her rôle so that inadvertently she might betray herself.

But it seemed that Miss Butts had herself well trained. Had I not known better, even I would have agreed that the leg was paralyzed, so motionless did she keep it. So as it became apparent that Miss Butts was not going to forget herself, and as our time was limited, I was obliged to employ the emergency test which I had planned so carefully.

SO I CARRIED MISS BUTTS TO THE ROCK SHELF

Now I ask you to witness, Mr. Pruitt, that there was nothing deceitful, unmannerly, or disorderly about it. When Wallett claims that I acted in a disorderly manner he distorts the facts. This is what happened; please follow me closely. A little green and brown striped snake came gliding through the grass at Miss Butts's feet. Miss Butts let out a screech that must have disturbed the kiddees in the sand flats a mile away, and without aid of myself or anybody else she sprang upright on both legs, leaped clear over the rock, and hurled herself upon me, with her arms around my neck for protection. Was I responsible for that, I ask? Certainly not, as anybody can see. The snake slid off into the creek, and, being rubber, it floated harmlessly downstream, taking in its wake the piece of string with which I had propelled it. Of course, with Miss Butts hanging around my neck, it was only natural that I should catch her in my arms to support her weight; but I did not grab her up in my arms, as the unscrupulous and fiery-tongued Wallett declares; neither did I use endearing tones and names to soothe her. In fact, Mr. Pruitt, as quickly as possible I stood Miss Butts down upon the rock, meantime assuring her that the snake was gone.

Now, in the height of her excitement Miss Butts entirely forgot that she was standing on her supposedly paralyzed leg, a thing that I had planned on exactly that way. In fact, she did more than I had dared hope. She stood upon the rock with her skirts elevated high, exclaiming in shrill tones:

"Where is it? Where is it?"

Then and there with my usual adroitness I hastily focused my kodak, which I carry by a shoulder strap, and snapped her as she pirouetted about on the rock. And I ask you, Mr. Pruitt, is there anything disorderly about that? You will observe from the inclosed picture that she is standing on the toe of her left foot, the paralyzed one, while the other foot is protruded high in the air much in the manner and poise of a chorus girl. What better proof of the fraudulency of the claim could we ask?

Having this picture secure in my kodak, I felt quite elated and helped Miss Butts down from the rock, after which she became rapidly calm. But she did not notice that she had betrayed herself until I mentioned it.

"The shock was a blessing in disguise, Miss Butts," I told her. "It caused you to recover the use of your leg."

Then she screamed and fell into my arms again. I led her to the rock and sat down beside her, and all the time she kept moaning: "It can't! It can't be!"

"Oh, yes, it can," I told her. "People do many strange things when they're excited. Often it makes them act natural. Now you must stand on your foot and exercise it to make it completely recover its functions."

"But I can't. It's paralyzed again," she cried.

"It can't be," I replied with marked assurance. "Nervous paroxysms never wear off that quickly. It'll go bad again quickly enough" (a fact, even if it never goes bad. I was very careful not to misstate anything, Mr. Pruitt), "and you should stand on it while you can. Let me help you up, Miss Butts."

Miss Butts was confused, as she allowed me to assist her to her feet. She said the leg tingled, but she walked on it by limping considerably.

"I'm sure—I'm afraid it won't last," she declared. "It's getting numb already."

"Forget about it," I told her. "Getting your mind on something else will assist nature to make the necessary remedies. Let's take some kodak pictures, Miss Butts."

So we took a number of snapshots, samples of which are inclosed. Please note especially the one in which Miss Butts is standing in front of the car. The license tag is plainly visible, thus eliminating any claim of fraud as to the time this picture was made, as I have a written statement from the garage that on June 27th I used the car carrying this license tag. You see, Mr. Pruitt, I leave no ragged edges hanging around. I like to build up a tight case against such crooks as Miss Butts and Lawyer Wallett, especially Lawyer Wallett.

Notice also the picture of myself and Miss Butts standing under the beech tree in the bark of which I had carved the numerals 6/27/29 as further evidence of the date. (I tripped the kodak with a string to make this picture.) Now I ask you, do not these pictures prove the serviceability of Miss Butts's legs?

As we drove back to town Miss Butts became very uneasy, saying that her leg was entirely numb again, and asked

me not to mention the incident of the morning, as it would make her look ridiculous. After Mrs. Elkins and I got Miss Butts safely transferred into her wheel chair, I hurried to the photographer's shop to have the films developed.

When I returned to the rooming house, Lawyer Wallett was there in consultation with Miss Butts in the parlor. I was greatly pleased at that. In fact, I could think of nothing that would afford me more pleasure than having Mr. Wallett witness my triumph. When any shark lawyer calls me a foul name he may expect a reaction, Mr. Pruitt, a violent reaction. I could see that Wallett did not welcome me. Miss Butts, in her wheel chair, was badly agitated.

"I ASK YOU, MR. PRUITT, IS THERE ANYTHING DISORDERLY IN THAT?"

"You may excuse yourself, Mr. Blizzard," said Wallett coldly.

"I may, but I have no such intention," I replied with equal coldness. You see, I give as good as they send, Mr. Pruitt. "I have something of importance to discuss with you two. You will be surprised to learn that I am a claim investigator for the Oil Belt and Western Railroad, and I have proof that you two," pointing at both of them —"that you two have conspired to defraud the railroad out of thirty thousand dollars."

Miss Butts choked a squeal and almost jumped out of her chair. Wallett stiffened as rigid as a corpse and changed colors like an electric sign.

"So that's what you mean sneaking around here?" he snorted. "A cheap railroad sneak! What do you mean by saying this case is a fraud?"

"Perhaps this will answer the question better than words, Mr. Wallett," I replied haughtily, handing him the pictures. "No need to destroy them, as I have others. You probably recognize the character."

Wallett looked at them with beads of perspiration popping out on his forehead and his eyes bulging out like electric push buttons.

"Where did you get them?" he demanded. "When?"

"In the mountains with my kodak this morning," I informed him, while he glared at me until I imagined I could feel the heat of his gaze. "And now, who is the dough face, Mr. Wallett, I ask you?"

But Lawyer Wallett did not answer me. He was shaking the pictures before Miss Butts's face with a violent and trembling hand.

"You—you—you—" he rasped.

Miss Butts snatched the pictures away from him. She was very pale. One glance at them and the look of consternation gave way to furious wrath. It was like tearing the mask off her face when she discarded the rôle of a harmless old maid and allowed the devil in her to show. She did a most surprising thing, Mr. Pruitt. She jumped to her feet with no sign of paralysis and hurled the pictures savagely into my face.

"There's your cussed pictures!" she snarled. "Played me for a sucker, didn't you?"

She was a raging tigress. I actually feared that she might try to visit upon me bodily harm. Wallett grabbed her arm and demanded an explanation. She shook him off like he were a kid brother.

"I said this bozo played me for a sucker. Isn't that explanation enough?" she snarled at him.

Imagine a woman calling me a bozo! I didn't like it a bit.

Wallett tried to put her back into the chair; but she refused to put.

"That gag's gone blooey, you fool!" she snarled, and she gave the wheel chair a kick with her left foot that sent it spinning out into the hall, where it collided with Mrs. Elkins and a bevy of curious, open-mouthed boarders who had been attracted by the uproar.

Naturally, I felt a great sense of satisfaction at my achievement; so I informed Mr. Wallett that I was ready to settle the claim out of court if he desired. Miss Butts snapped out something, but Wallett shut her up.

"When we get ready to settle we'll let you know," he barked, and with that he towed Miss Butts out to his car at the curb and quickly disappeared.

Of course, Mrs. Elkins and the other ladies were quite curious. I was quite a hero in their eyes as I explained.

"I never did trust that hussy," declared Mrs. Elkins.

I waited on the front porch for the claimants to return. After some time a man approached. He was smoking a black cigar, and wore a star on his left suspender.

"Are you Blizzard?" he asked.

"I am. Free and happy as a lark," I replied.

"You may be happy, but you ain't free by a danged sight," he grinned. "You're under arrest."

"What?" I demanded, quite upset. "You can't arrest a man without cause!"

"I've got a warrant in one pocket and handcuffs in the other," he said. "Are you comin' peaceable?"

I went with him to a room on the second floor of a downtown office building and entered the office marked "Justice of the Peace." Miss Butts and Lawyer Wallett were there.

"Mr. Blizzard, you are charged with disorderly conduct and with trifling with this lady's affections," the justice informed me. "Have you any plea to enter?"

"Not guilty!" I answered.

The justice read the charges as filed, viz.: disorderly conduct, cruelty, and malicious misrepresentation. My taking a picture of Miss Butts while she stood on one foot out of reach of the snake was both vulgar and disorderly, so the charges read. My exposure of my real motive after winning Miss Butts's affections, which is positively false, was cruelty in its most inhuman form. And my posing as a millionaire, which, as you know, was not my fault, furnished the grounds for the charge of misrepresentation. Imagine such outrageous and unmerited charges, Mr. Pruitt! I see plainly that it is only a savage attempt by the depraved Wallett to exact vengeance for my outwitting him in the thirty thousand dollar suit.

Of course, I pleaded my case with force and eloquence; but it did no good. Wallett had the justice completely subsidized, and he enlarged bitterly upon all three of the charges.

"You took a cowardly advantage of a trusting and unsuspecting young woman, and, without her knowledge or sanction, snapped an unsightly and vulgar picture of her. You had the audacity, then, and the salacity, to flaunt that picture in the young lady's face. It is the most vulgar act on criminal records!"

Lawyer Wallett hissed these accusations at me over the end of a threatening index finger.

"You played with the young lady's affections and then broke her heart as unfeelingly as—"

"That is not true," I declared hotly. "It is a lie. All your charges are preposterous. I did nothing to win her affections."

"You took the young lady riding," he stormed. "With pretty speeches you influenced her to slip away without the knowledge of her counsel. Why, if not to make her believe that you cared for her? You carried her in your arms from the car. Why carry her?"

"Because she would not walk," I replied with dignity.

"Did you ask her to walk?"

"No. She was pretending—"

"She was pretending nothing. You carried her in your arms, though by your own statement you knew she could walk. Your every act led her to believe in the genuineness of your affection for her. You caught her in your arms when she was frightened by the snake. Was she in danger of being bitten?"

"No; but—"

"Then you did it, not to protect her, but to win her heart that you might trample it into the dust. You are an inhuman brute; a beast of the lowest stripe!"

Imagine such language, Mr. Pruitt! And the justice of the peace nodded his sanction over the top of his glasses, and my future looked very dark.

"Your bond is two thousand dollars, Mr. Blizzard," the justice said. "Constable Murphy, lock this man up until the bond is furnished."

So you see, Mr. Pruitt, that because I carried the banner of right and justice boldly and victoriously into the camp of the defrauders, they have turned on me, taking an unfair advantage, and have incarcerated me in this vile place, where I shall be held until you furnish the two thousand dollar bond. I don't like it a little bit!

Lawyer Wallett called at the jail and served on me notice of the new suit which he is filing for his client, Miss Butts. It is most ridiculous. 'He charges that the company knowingly

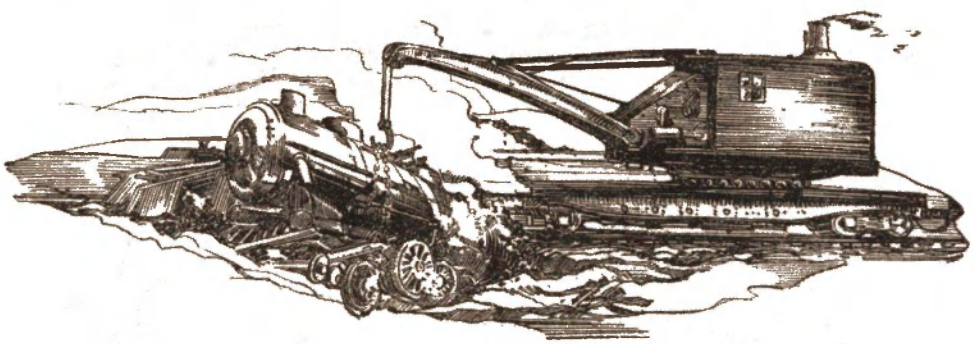
and maliciously permitted and directed its employee, viz., myself, to win the affections of the plaintiff for the sole purpose of trampling them under foot, thus humiliating her and breaking her spirit so that she should not be able to prosecute her just and honest claim for damages because of injury suffered at the hands of the company. He further charges me and the company with a conspiracy to defraud Miss Butts of her just and legal dues by interfering with her right and ability to prosecute. The amount of mental anguish the plaintiff has suffered because of these acts is sixty thousand dollars, he says, of which fact you already are informed.

So you see, Mr. Pruitt, that we face dangerous and persistent opponents in Wallett and Butts. The company must have a shrewd and capable man to handle this new case; so you see how urgent it is that you quickly arrange the bond and release me. Of course, I shall handle the case in my usual competent and conclusive manner.

Yours in trouble,

BALTIMORE BLIZZARD.

P. S.—There are whole schools of hungry fleas in this place. I don't like it a little bit! B. B.



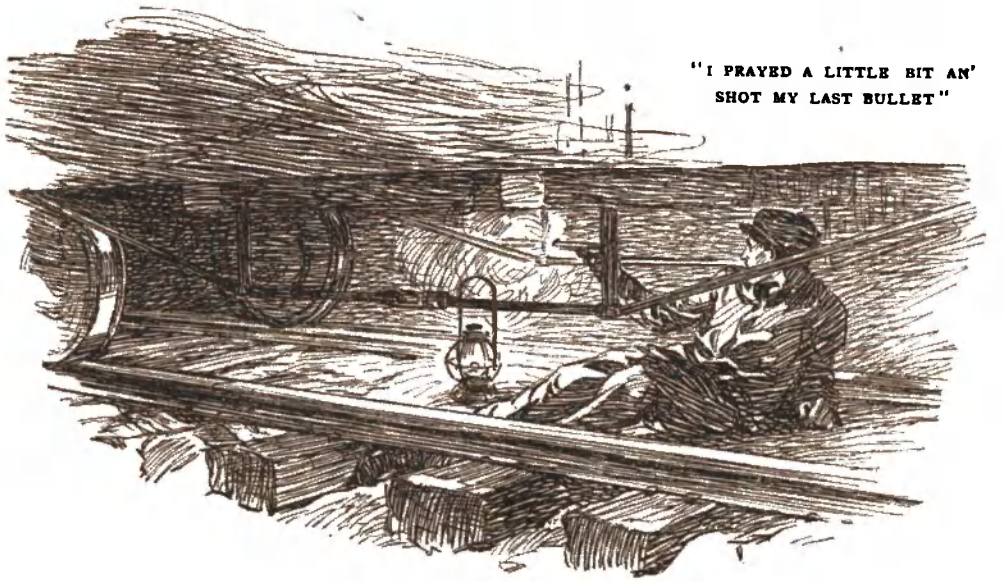
TUNNEL UNDER GIBRALTAR STRAIT PROPOSED TO JOIN EUROPE AND AFRICA

KING ALFONSO of Spain has appointed a commission of experts to study a proposed project for building, under the Strait of Gibraltar, a tunnel that would join Europe and Africa. Such a tunnel would furnish a new and profitable outlet for the wealth of interior Africa, and provide a through rail route between Europe and the southernmost tip of Africa. In other words, it would extend by thousands of miles the rail link joining Cairo with Cape Town.

There are, so it is reported, no insuperable obstacles in the way of driving a tunnel through the rock beneath the Strait of Gibraltar. Air-driven rock drills, air-operated mucking machines, and electrically propelled mucking trains are available to-day and capable of meeting any needs of the tunnel drivers.

At its narrowest part, the Strait of Gibraltar is only a trifle more than eight miles wide—a distance shorter than that covered by several existing tunnels. But, in order to pierce solid rock, the tunnel drivers would have to carry their line well below the bed of the strait, which lies on an average of more than 1,000 feet below the surface of the Mediterranean. Therefore, in order to avoid prohibitive grades in mounting toward the portals, the tunnel would have to be made many miles longer. Indeed, the tunnel might measure more than thirty miles between portals in order to meet the operating requirements of modern railway practice.

Undoubtedly, a tunnel under the Strait of Gibraltar would save much time in the movement of freight and passengers between Europe and Africa, and in the course of years the volume of this service would inevitably increase. The question is whether or not existing conditions and the outlook in the near future would justify so gigantic a venture.



"I PRAYED A LITTLE BIT AN' SHOT MY LAST BULLET"

Shootin' Air

Death Rode the Brake Beam and the Shack's Only Chance for Life Was a Shot

By Gilson Willets and Gene Clark

THE stranger flung open the door of an isolated switchman's shanty on the Foothill Division. It seemed to take all his strength to slam it against a driving gale that swept down from the mountains. He shook the snow and sleet from his tattered clothes, passed gnarled fingers through the cobwebs of ice that clung to his eyebrows, blinked his eyes and glanced about.

He beheld a silent group of men gathered at a roaring stove. In their stare he read open hostility.

"No bums in here," growled one. "Clear out!"

"Have a heart, boys," pleaded the newcomer. "I know I'm a bum, but I used to be as good a 'rail' as any o' you. T' prove it, I'll tell 'bout th' time I almost got mine in th' Wicks Tunnel."

They motioned him to a seat, an upturned tool box. One gave him tobacco, another a light, and then all settled themselves to hear his story.

The stranger's claim to their hospitality was made in the language they knew. Tramps were not welcome, but old-timers occasionally visited the shanty. They always had an interesting story to tell—for a price.

"It wuz before the days o' automatic blocks, an' double tracks, an' oil burners an' sich newfangled contraptions," commenced the stranger. "In them days we had to be real men or

we didn't last long. I thought I wuz pretty good, but I got took down a peg er two.

"I wuz called on a extra job out o' Great Falls an' had to deadhead to Clancy. It wuz a work train job, cleanin' up some cuts an' sich, after th' winter's slides. Th' snow wuz meltin', an' th' right-o'-way wuz mud ever'-where they wuzn't cinders. Water wuz tricklin' down all th' cuts an' gullies, an' it wuz purty sloppy underfoot.

"Well, I went on th' job, but when I seen what we had to put up with, I sure wisht I'd 'a' played sick when I got th' call! Th' shovel wuz workin' in a cut a few miles from Clancy, an' what a mess it wuz! Th' cut wuz on a curve, an' they wuz muckin' out a purty bad slide. They had a spur built off to one side to load th' dump cars. When I spotted th' cars at th' shovel, I had to waller in th' mud like a hog on a picnic!

"We finally got th' cars loaded, an' started up th' hill toards th' tunnel. We wuz haulin' to a fill a few miles above th' tunnel where we plowed th' stuff to one side fer ballast. We made a couple o' trips without anything unusual happenin', an' then we started on th' one I'll never fergit!

"We wuz haulin' fifteen cars at a time, up th' two per cent grade, an' th' ol' bullgine wuz handlin' 'em purty easy. Th' roadmaster, at th' dump, said he needed 'bout twenty-one er two cars more, an' as th' hoghead thought he could pull 'em, we took th' whole bunch at one trip. We wanted to get out o' there as quick as we could!

"On th' last trip we had time on No. 28 comin' down th' hill, an' we axpected to make th' little sidin' jist th' other side o' th' tunnel. Th' ol' goat had a hard time gittin' 'em started on th' slippery rails, but we finally got to rollin'. Th' grade wuzn't so bad till we got up toards th' tunnel, and we thought we could make it all right.

"When we got into th' tunnel a little ways, I saw we wuz goin' to have some trouble! Th' tunnel roof wuz leakin', an' th' rails wuz so slippery th' hoghead had to start feedin' har sand to git th' drivers to hold. We kep' goin', all right, though, and th' smoke wuz comin' back som'pin' fierce! Th' con an' me got in th' caboose an' shut th' doors tight an' felt sorry fer th' fellers on th' head end.

"After a while we started goin' slower an' slower, an' when I looked at th' air gauge, I saw they wuz only 'bout forty pounds o' air. I knew right away what wuz th' matter. Th' hogger wuz blowin' so much sand on th' rails he wuz drawin' th' pressure from th' trainline an' th' brakes wuz stickin'.

"Th' ol' drag stopped purty soon, an' I tied a hankercher 'round my face so's I could breathe in th' smoke, then I started up, along th' train, bleedin' off th' air in th' reserve tanks on th' cars. Th' preachers tell 'bout hell-fire an' brimstone, but they couldn't be nuthin' worse than that smoke! I coughed an' sputtered like a coyote on a frosty night, but I managed to git enough air through th' hankercher to keep goin'.

"I remembered that No. 28 wuz comin' down through there purty soon, an' I knew I had to hurry if we didn't want to git all smeared through th' tunnel! Maybe th' fellers on th' head end wuz gassed an' couldn't flag her!

"I got 'bout halfway up to th' engine when I found a car with th' rod gone off th' bleedin' valve. I crawled under th' car, between th' rails, to git at th' shank o' th' valve, 'cause if even

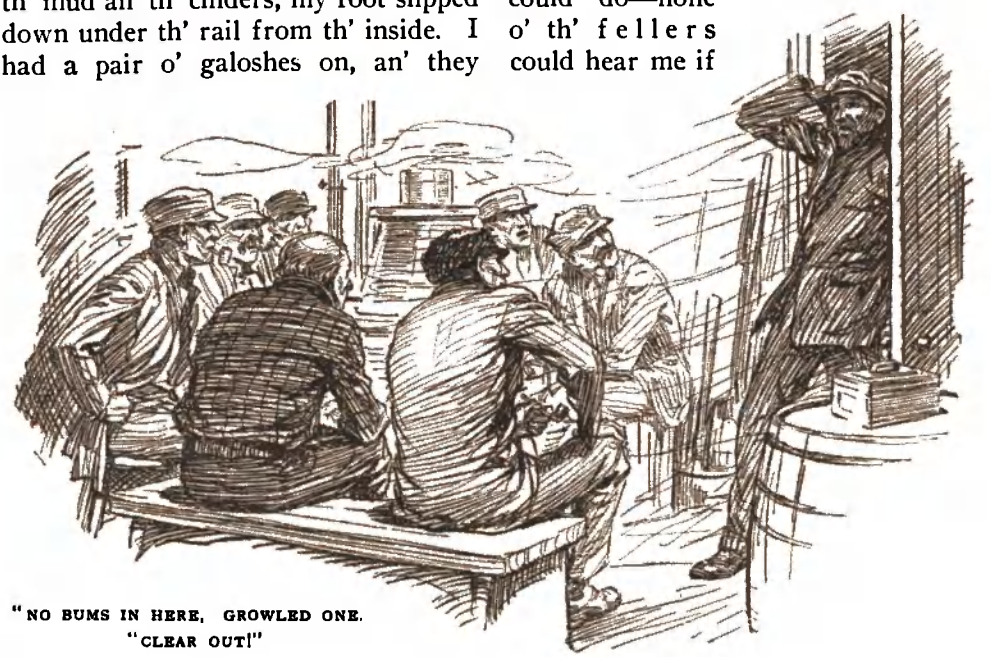
one brake wuz stickin', maybe we couldn't git started agin.

" I had a lantern with me, 'cause th' tunnel wuz blacker'n a nigger at midnight, an' even with th' lantern, I couldn't see much in th' smoke. I bled off th' tank, all right, an' twisted round to crawl out. But as I scrambled in th' mud an' th' cinders, my foot slipped down under th' rail from th' inside. I had a pair o' galoshes on, an' they caught an' I couldn't pull my foot out!

" I pulled an' twisted an' cussed an' raved, but th' harder I tried, th' tighter my foot stuck! I begin to git kinda scairt; an' that made me work all th' harder. I dug an' clawed an' scratched, but they wuz some big clinkers under th' rail, an' my foot wuz caught between 'em.

" An' then I heard th' engine startin' to puff an' slip! I jist *knew* I had to git out or I wuz done fer! 'Course, I wuz between th' rails—but th' brake-riggin' on them cars didn't clear very far. An' I ain't one o' them fellers that have to stand twice in th' same place to make a shadder. If I laid down on th' ties an' let her roll over me, I'd look like a chunk o' hamburger when I come out!

" When a feller's in a hole like that, his brain sure works fast, an' I guess, that time, mine broke all existin' records. I couldn't think o' anything I could do—none o' th' fellers could hear me if I yelled, an' I couldn't stop th' train, an' I couldn't git out!



"NO BUMS IN HERE, GROWLED ONE. "CLEAR OUT!"

" Then I got a hunch! I allus carried a six-gun in them days, 'cause they wuz a lot o' tough bums an' 'boes ridin' th' trains, an' sometimes we needed a gat. I could see, above th' journal o' th' trucks jist behind me, where th' air hose wuz hangin' down between th' cars. If I could shoot a hole in it th' train couldn't move till they fixed th' hose an' pumped th' air up agin, so's th' brakes would release.

" I jerked out th' ol' hogleg an' tried to aim at th' air hose, but I couldn't see th' sights. Th' lantern didn't give enough light, so I jist had to guess at

it. I pulled th' trigger, an' outside o' th' noise o' th' gun, nuthin' happened! I tried it agin an' agin, an' still nuthin' happened! I begin to git scairt!

"An' then th' car begins to move! Th' hogger wuz givin' her some sand, an' th' drivers wuz gittin' a better holt on th' rails. I wuz purty nervous, but I tried to pull myself together so's I could shoot. An' I missed agin! Th' hose must 'a' been twenty-four er five feet away, an' as dark as it wuz, it wuzn't very plain to shoot at, even at that distance. I shot agin an' I missed it agin! It wuz so dark I couldn't even see where th' bullets wuz hittin'!

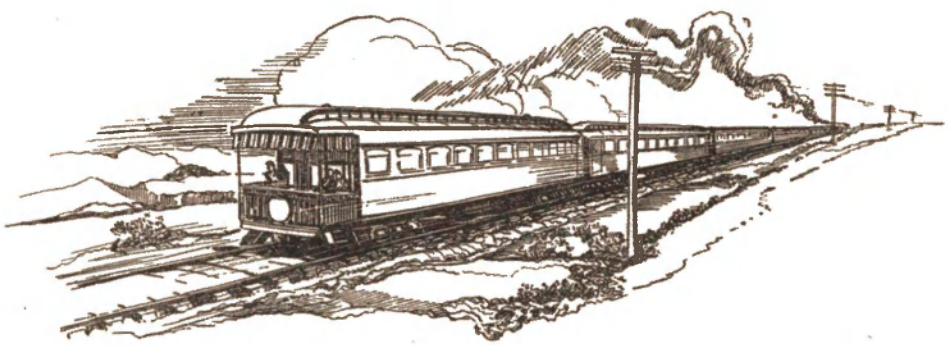
"I only had one shell left, an' that brake-riggin' wuz gittin' closer an' closer! 'Course, th' hose wuz gittin' closer, too, but that didn't make me feel any easier, 'cause when that hose got to me, I'd probably be already turned inside out!

"I guess I prayed a little bit, an' 'en I gritted my teeth an' shot my last bullet!

"P-s-s-s-s-shews-s-s-sh, went th' air, as th' hose busted, an' th' brakes clanked all along th' train as they tightened on th' wheels! I had fin'ly hit it! I dropped th' gun an' laid back on th' ties an' laughed an' laughed, kinda foolish like—I guess I wuz scairt silly.

"Well, they come an' found me purty soon, an' maybe you think I wuzn't glad to git outa there! It wuz that ol' gat that saved my life, an' I still got it at home, an' the shell that did th' business. That wuz one o' th' tightest holes I wuz ever in!"

"Now, is they any o' you fellers that 'd stake me to four bits?"



RAILWAY TUNNEL PROPOSED TO JOIN ENGLAND AND FRANCE

THE Channel Tunnel Committee, which was appointed by the British Government in the Spring of 1929, has reported favorably on the proposed railway tunnel between England and France, the construction of which tunnel has been under advisement frequently during the past 50 years.

The committee scoffs at the idea of an invasion by way of such a tunnel—heretofore the main talking point of the opposition—and recommends that the government proceed with its construction. Work would thus be provided for 12,000 men for a period of four years.

The present plan, which involves an estimated expenditure of $150,000,000, includes the building of two sumps—one on each side of the channel—so that either nation could promptly flood the tunnel should such be advisable in case of war.

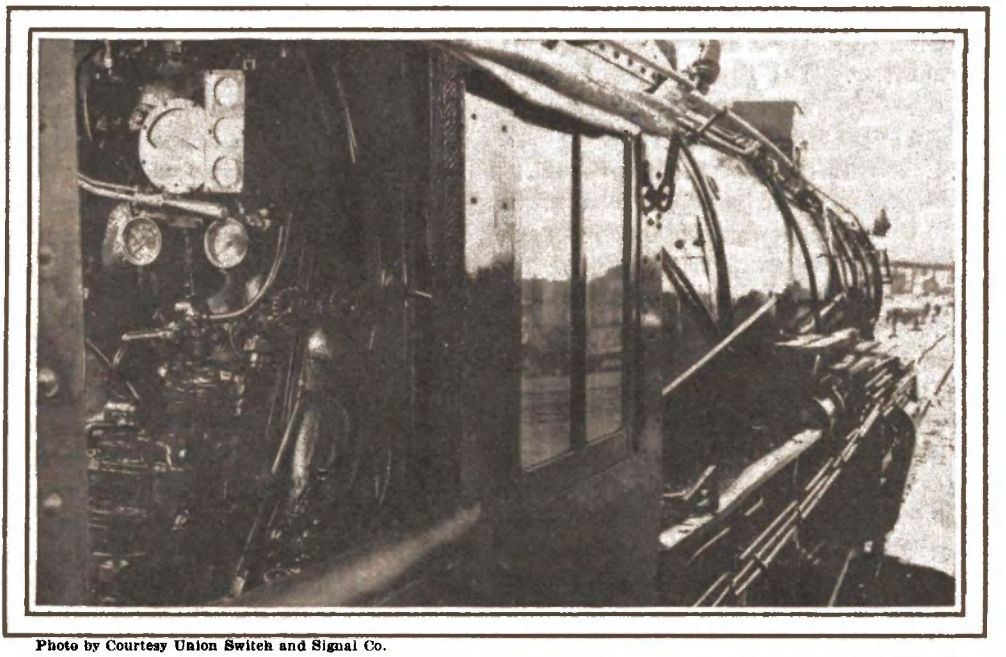


Photo by Courtesy Union Switch and Signal Co.

THE CAB SIGNAL JUST ABOVE THE BRAKE VALVES SHOWS THE ENGINEER THE SIGNAL INDICATIONS ALONG THE TRACK REGARDLESS OF WEATHER

Making the Trains Behave

The Automatic Train Control From Its Beginning Down to Now, and Its Place in Railroading

By Charles Frederick Carter

A NORTH-BOUND freight train had orders to meet a south-bound passenger train at a flag station on a single track railroad on the western fringe of the corn belt on a pleasant summer night some years ago. After heading the train in at the south switch in due form, the head brakeman remained on the ground. As the caboose passed in to clear, the hind man threw the switch back to the main line and also remained on the ground, where the conductor joined the two.

When the train was in to clear, the engineer concluded that he, too, would take advantage of the opportunity for an airing while waiting for the passenger train, so he dropped to the ground, leaving the engine working to pull up near the north switch. The engineer took it for granted that the fireman, who had stepped out to the front end to cover up the headlight as prescribed by the rules, would return over the run-

ning board to the cab, shut off steam and stop the train at the north end of the siding. The fireman, not being a mind reader, knew nothing of the engineer's plans; so after covering the headlight he dropped to the ground.

With not a soul on board to interfere that freight train rumbled on the length of that passing track and out upon the main line, a split switch being no obstacle to a determined locomotive. It kept on going until the locomotive lost interest in the adventure, owing to lack of steam, when it stopped.

Fortunately the passenger train had been delayed. It was also fortunate that the moon was shining brightly and that the road lay across level prairie. The engineer, therefore, saw the freight in ample time to stop. He whistled a signal to back up, but that signal also was ignored. So were other signals and strong language.

Finally the passenger conductor ran forward to ask the gentlemen on the freight if they had understood that they were to meet the passenger train out on the main line between stations. Finding no one to whom he could put the question, he returned to his own train and conferred with his engineer. It was decided to send the fireman over to the freight engine to get up steam and back the train to the passing track where it should have been, but wasn't, while the passenger conductor and baggageman posted themselves at the rear of the freight to guard against eventualities while backing to the flag station.

The only casualties resulting from this unique incident happened to the feelings of the freight crew after the division superintendent had recovered sufficiently to voice his opinion of their conceptions of railroading as exemplified in their conduct that summer night.

This account of an actual occurrence simply goes to prove what every veteran employee knows; namely, that *any* thing can happen on a railroad. It may be true that freight trains do not start out unattended every day in the year to carve out careers for themselves, but due to other circumstances trains have so often been where they should not have been, that for many weary years great efforts have been made to provide a dependable means of controlling their movements outside of the trains themselves. The brunt of such endeavors has fallen upon the railroad companies, although there has been no lack of volunteer enthusiasts who have tried to produce devices to stop or control trains automatically.

In the vernacular, "automatic train control" is a mechanical or electromagnetic device which will take instant charge of a speeding train when the engineer drops dead at his post, as has happened, or if for any reason whatsoever he attempts to run by a caution signal, which has also happened.

At its beginning the quest for an automatic means of making trains behave themselves had all the outward and visible signs of being one of those wild and fanciful freaks with which railroad history has been enlivened. But as time went on automatic train control was recognized as desirable, though many thought it unattainable.

No great invention ever sprang full-fledged from the brain of Genius. First comes the period of incubation of an idea. Then follow long years of cultivation of the tender sprout, in which many men take part, but few contribute anything of value. Perhaps some worker in an entirely different field may hit upon some fundamental which gives the budding invention an

impetus. Still more years must elapse before the finished mechanism can perform its part of the world's work. Latterly, scientific research in the laboratories of great corporations has materially accelerated the process, though in orderly sequence the same course must be followed by scientists that from time immemorial has been followed by amateurs.

Photo by Courtesy General Railway Signal Company.

A-C COLOR LIGHT SIGNALING WITH AUTOMATIC TRAIN CONTROL ON SOUTHERN BETWEEN ASHEVILLE AND SALISBURY

The first real progress toward development of automatic train control was made when U. S. patent No. 130,661 was granted August 20, 1872, to Dr. William Robinson, covering the closed track circuit. No single invention in the development of railway transportation has contributed more toward safety and dispatch than the track circuit. This simple invention furnishes the foundation of practically every one of the intricate systems of block signaling in use to-day wherein the train is, under all conditions, continuously active in maintaining its own protection.

The first fundamental for automatic train control was now available; but

before progress could be made another elementary device was needed as a foundation. This was provided by George Westinghouse, who gave the world the air brake about the time that Robinson announced the closed circuit.

Even with these two fundamentals at hand more than half a century of study and experiment was required to produce a practicable train control apparatus. The chief difficulty was that inventors started off on a wrong tangent, just as Robinson and Westinghouse did, but instead of recognizing their error as these two geniuses did, they persisted in it.

In the first place they confined their efforts for years to the sole endeavor to *stop* trains, a feat which, relatively speaking, is not particularly difficult, by employing a wayside device working with another device on the engine. But when trains are brought to a standstill they require time in which to get under way again. If too many trains are stopped needlessly traffic is inevitably demoralized. On a busy railroad a device which would arbitrarily stop trains at every caution signal would tie up the road. What is needed is an automatic stop with brains enough to discriminate in dealing with varying operating conditions, or, at least, to cooperate with the engineer, whose business it is to furnish the brains.

In other words, what was wanted was not a train stop, but train *control;* that is, apparatus which would not only allow the engineer to handle his train, but take charge of the train only if and when the engineer failed to take the action necessary to prevent accident.

Another error to which inventors clung tenaciously was the idea that train stops should be mechanical contact devices, such as ramps, for instance. Under certain favorable conditions such devices may serve. They have been in use in New York subways for a number of years and in a few other places where they are fully protected from the weather, and they have given satisfactory service. But, for one thing, steam railroads have not yet been placed under roof, not to mention other grave objections to mechanical contact devices.

Train Stopping Devices

The first automatic train stop ever tried out on a steam railroad was the invention of one Vogt, General Superintendent of Motive Power of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which was installed on a section of the main line near Altoona, in 1889. The device consisted of a glass tube projecting above the roof of the cab over the engineer's seat and connected with the train pipe so that if the tube was broken air would escape and thus set the brakes. The orifice was small so that air would escape slowly producing the equivalent of a service application of the brakes. The tube was to be broken, if the engineer attempted to run by a stop signal, by an iron rod hinged to the signal post and to the semaphore blade in such a manner that it would drop horizontally over the track just above the cab roof when the signal was at stop. When the semaphore blade went to clear, the rod was lifted out of the way of the glass tube.

One winter day a passenger train started through the Gallitzin Tunnel, on the crest of the Allegheny Mountains, hauled by an engine equipped with the Vogt train stop. An icicle had formed on the roof of the tunnel and hung down in exactly the position to break the glass tube, which it proceeded to do. The brakes were applied and the train came to a stop in the tunnel, where the smoke and gas and steam

were thick, and, of course, could not proceed until the glass tube was replaced so the brakes could be released. That was the last of the Vogt train stop, so far as the Pennsylvania Railroad was concerned.

Twenty years later the identical scheme was tried out on the Washington Water Power Company's electric interurban line twenty-nine miles long, between Spokane and Cheney and Medical Lake, Washington. There were no tunnels in which to trap passengers, but, just the same, the train stop was allowed to sink quietly into oblivion.

About the same time a similar device, patented by S. H. Harrington, was tried out on the Northern Railroad of New Jersey, a subsidiary of the Erie Railroad. The Harrington idea of a train stop consisted of a sash weight dangling from an iron rod lowered across the track by the action of the semaphore blade of the automatic block signal going to "stop." The sash weight was expected to strike a horizontal lever over the cab roof operating a cock connected to the train pipe to vent it exactly as the glass tube was supposed to do and thus set the air brakes in case the train attempted to pass the stop signal.

A party of railroad men, including a distinguished signal engineer, went out one day to see the train stop perform. The wayside signal was set to stop the train, which thereupon attempted to pass it. The distinguished signal engineer was so eager to see what would happen that he climbed on to the roof of the car next to the engine. He saw. What happened was that the engineer was given a terrific blow on the head by the dangling sash weight as the car passed under it, knocking him off the roof and into a snowdrift beside the track. That was the end of the Harrington train stop.

Two years after Vogt's glass tube stop embarked upon its brief career the first installation of the Rowell-Potter mechanical trip train stop was made on the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn narrow gauge railroad, connecting Lynn with East Boston, Mass. It was next installed on the Intramural Railway on the grounds of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, where it had an excellent vantage point from which to be admired by visiting railroad officials. Immediately following this it was tried out on three of Chicago's elevated railroads, or parts thereof. Three minor steam railroads in the vicinity of Chicago next gave it a trial, after which experimental installations were made on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad in 1908-9.

Meanwhile, the railroads were recognizing the fact that automatic train stops constituted a matter that would have to be dealt with. In various ways, both collectively and through individual railroads, the question was studied. The first collective organization to take up automatic train stops was the "Railway Signaling Club," organized in Chicago March 11, 1895. It wasn't much of an organization at first, for railway signaling was then a new art. But the organization held together until it developed into the Railway Signal Association, then into a part of the Federal railroad organization during government operation, and finally into the Signal Section of the American Railway Association and as such is now regarded as a highly important factor in railroad operation.

First and consistently foremost of railroad corporations to take automatic train control seriously was the New

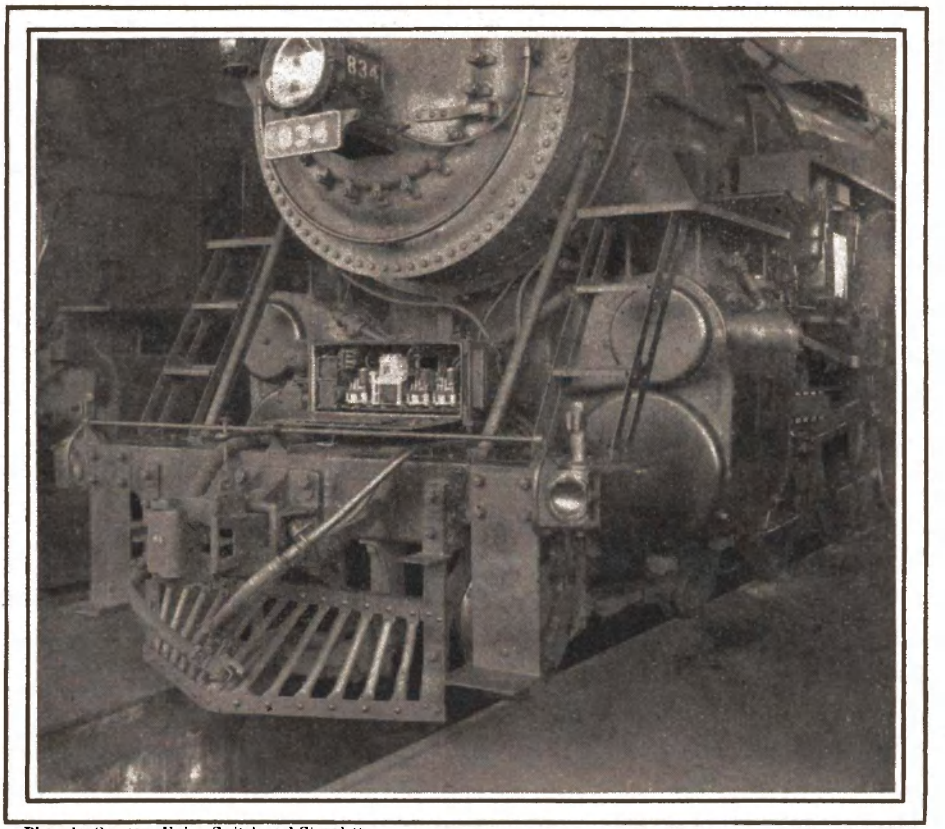


Photo by Courtesy Union Switch and Signal Co.

A CENTRAL OF NEW JERSEY ENGINE EQUIPPED WITH THE CONTINUOUS TYPE TRAIN CONTROL, SHOWING THE EQUIPMENT BOX OPENED ON THE PILOT. THE TRACK RECEIVER CAN BE SEEN SUSPENDED FROM THE PILOT BEAM

York Central Railroad, which in 1904 appointed a committee of engineers and signal experts from the various affiliated companies to find, study, or develop on its own initiative a practicable train control device. For more than twenty years the committee kept at its task with infinite pains and tireless energy before finding what it sought; namely, a device which would safeguard train operation under all conditions possible to foresee without needlessly interfering with the free movement of traffic.

From the outset there were train stops for the committee to investigate; or, rather, things that their fond inventors thought were, or should be, train stops. Indeed, the committee was overwhelmed with inventions and appeals from their owners to give them a trial. Approximately four hundred proposed schemes for train stops were investigated by this hard-working committee. Of the lot, a beggarly dozen were found to have sufficient merit to be worthy of more thorough study and a still smaller number worth a practical trial, which in each such case was made at much trouble and expense.

If would-be inventors failed to contribute anything to the science and art of railroad operation they proved to be eminently successful as propagandists. So much public interest was aroused by talk about automatic train stops that

gradually a popular impression was created that such devices were practicable and only waiting for installation, after which accidents of any nature whatsoever would be forever impossible on railroads, and that only sinister malevolence of railroad managers prevented their immediate adoption.

Train Control Board Investigations

Something to this effect, though perhaps not formulated in any such language, must have been in the minds of Congress; for that body, by joint resolution, on June 30, 1906, created the Block Signal and Train Control Board to investigate and report upon safety devices, more particularly upon automatic train stops.

One of the earliest steps of the board after organization was to send a sub-committee to Europe to see what was being done there with train stops in deference to one of the most widely held popular illusions in America, which is that European railroads and all that thereto pertains must of necessity be better than anything a mere American railroad has or does. All the sub-committee could find was one mechanical trip cab signal in experimental use on a short stretch of one English railroad and a similar installation of another cab signal in France.

Meanwhile, the residue of the board remaining at home was overwhelmed by hosts of near-inventors which swept down upon it front, flank and rear. If any members of the board cherished the delusion that the railroads were

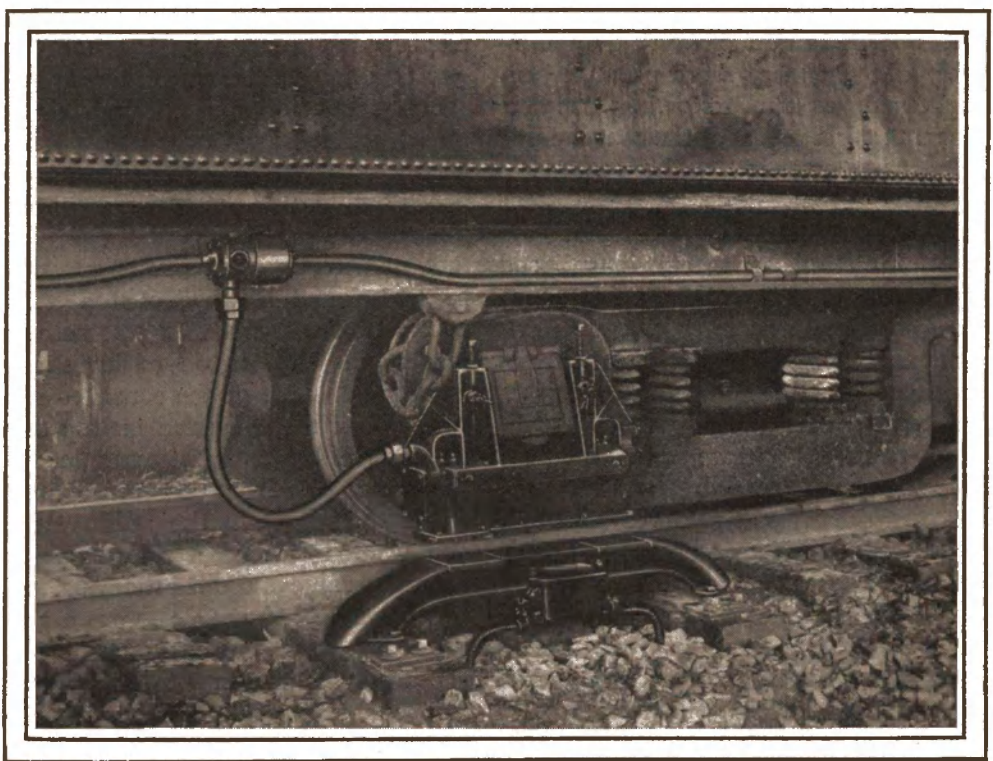


Photo by Courtesy General Railway Signal Company.

TYPE OF TRAIN CONTROL TRACK RECEIVER OVER THE INDUCTOR. THIS EQUIPMENT IS ON LOCOMOTIVE 3277 OF THE NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD

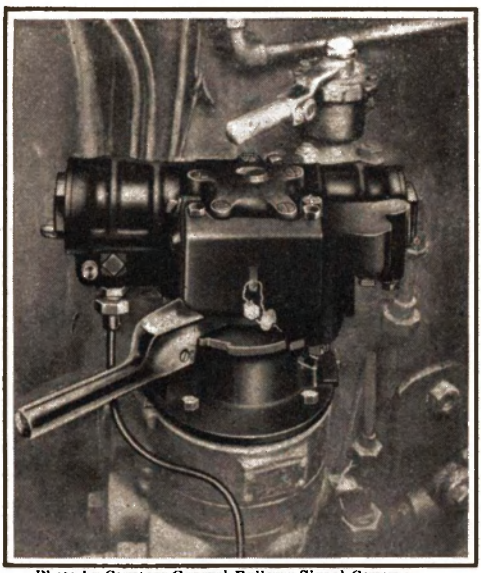


Photo by Courtesy General Railway Signal Company.
THIS PHOTO SHOWS THE ACTUATOR WITH LIMITED REDUCTION FEATURE APPLIED TO THE ENGINEER'S BRAKE VALVE

willfully suppressing meritorious devices offered to them, which they probably did not, they were promptly enlightened, as the following excerpts from the first report of the board, dated November 20, 1908, will show.

"Of the hundreds of descriptions and plans of devices or systems for the promotion of safety in railroad operation examined by the board, so few possessed any merit that it is evident that a large proportion of the inventors or proprietors of such devices are entirely unfamiliar with the conditions to be met with in railroading, the development of safety appliances, the state of the art of signaling, and often with well-known natural laws. This is manifested in three forms:

"(1) In devices which no matter how well designed or constructed would be dangerous or of little value.

"(2) In devices which no matter how well the details of design and construction were carried out, are fundamentally wrong in principle.

"(3) In devices or systems which, while theoretically useful and workable, are designed without regard to well-known properties of materials or a consideration of quantitative values and of the forces and velocities involved."

The final report of the board, dated June 29, 1912, recorded the fact that 1,146 devices and systems intended to promote safety of railroad operation had been submitted to it. On this point the report said:

"The automatic train stop, the investigation of which was one of the two chief purposes aimed at in the establishment of this board, continues to be a live subject."

After America entered the war and the government had taken control of the railroads, the Signal Section of the American Railway Association was continued as a part of the Federal organization. Its experience during government control was not unlike that under its previous existence. Let a couple of examples from the unpublished archives of the government suffice for the present.

A minister in Iowa was so sure that he had found a way to stop trains automatically that a man was actually sent from Washington to investigate and report. The device consisted of a tank of oil to be carried on top of a locomotive boiler with pipes leading therefrom in front of the driving wheels and close to the rails. When you wanted to stop a train you just opened a valve and oiled the rails, and, the drivers being unable to get a grip, the train would have to stop. When asked how he proposed to start a train stopped by greasy rails, the inventor replied:

"I hadn't thought of that!"

Still more ingenious was the inventor

who proposed to use a skunk as a danger signal— Oh, well! If you don't believe me, get permission to examine the archives of the signal section and read for yourself. One driving wheel of the locomotive was to be removed and in its place was to be an elliptical driving wheel which would hobble along like a man with a short leg so long as the track was clear. Under such circumstances the skunk was expected to behave like a gentleman.

The skunk was to be confined in a narrow cage directly in front of the engineer's face, with its head toward the engine. Suppose the engineer disregarded a stop signal. That elliptical driving wheel would trip a trigger, which released a rod which prodded the skunk in the ribs. Quite properly, the skunk would regard this as a personal affront and—a skunk knows how to resent an insult! If the engineer didn't stop after that he deserved whatever happened to him.

The humor in this incident lies in the fact that this device was gravely taken up for consideration at a session of the Federal signal department. After protracted debate it was agreed that owing to lack of an available appropriation the invention could not be given a trial.

Lest the hasty jump to the conclusion that any time whatever devoted to such preposterous proposals was wasted, or worse than wasted, it may be well to quote here the following excerpt from the first report of the Block Signal and Train Control Board explaining why it had been obliged to write 4,500 letters in a year.

"No small part of the correspondence of the board had to do with complaints and demands for an investigation of alleged suppressions of important inventions by powerful corporations and associations to the serious

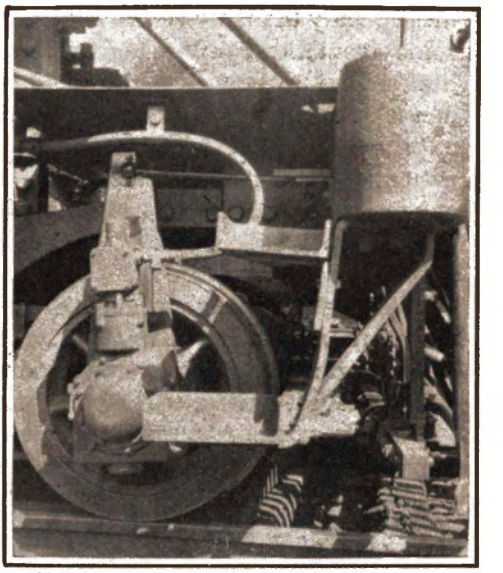


Photo by Courtesy Union Switch and Signal Co.

A SIDE VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE LOCATION OF THE ELECTRIC SPEED GOVERNOR ON THE LEADING WHEEL OF THE ENGINE TRUCK, AND ALSO THE TRACK RECEIVER, WHICH HANGS DOWN FROM THE PILOT BEAM

detriment of public interest and great pecuniary harm to individuals. The nature of the charges made indicates a necessity for investigation to determine whether they are justified in fact, it being considered equally important from the standpoint of the public to establish definitely that such accusations are untrue as they are true. There appears to be a very general belief that the inventor without means or influence cannot get his inventions considered by railroad officials; and in consequence appeals by such inventors to the government for its aid to secure what is believed to be their rights have been both frequent and insistent."

Yet the board was obliged to confess on another page that:

"Another fruitful source of correspondence has been the protest of inventors on whose apparatus the board has felt obliged to report adversely; and it is interesting to note that not

infrequently the most vigorous protests come from those whose devices have been found to possess a minimum of merit. . . . In a few instances in which on account of fundamental faults in system the board has reported unfavorably, the inventor or proprietor has insisted on a practical test of his device notwithstanding."

While the numerous vagaries of evolution of automatic train control were occupying much more attention than they deserved, steady, if slow, progress was being made. A number of inventions were deemed worthy of trial on various railroads. Installations were accordingly made on short sections of track and a limited number of locomotives, but always on a scale large enough to afford a fair decision.

Actions of the Interstate Commerce Commission

In 1922 and again in 1924 the government once more took a hand in the quest for automatic train control. This time government participation took the form of orders from the Interstate Commerce Commission directing ninety-four railroads to make experimental installations of automatic train control on specified minimums of track mileage. Pursuant to these orders, various forms of automatic train control had been installed up to the end of March, 1929, on a total of 12,422 miles of line, including 20,121 miles of track, since some sections of railroad equipped have two, three or four main line tracks, and on 9,875 locomotives.

In some instances these experimental installations have been limited to the minimum mileage prescribed by the Interstate Commerce Commission; few railroads have greatly exceeded their prescribed stint.

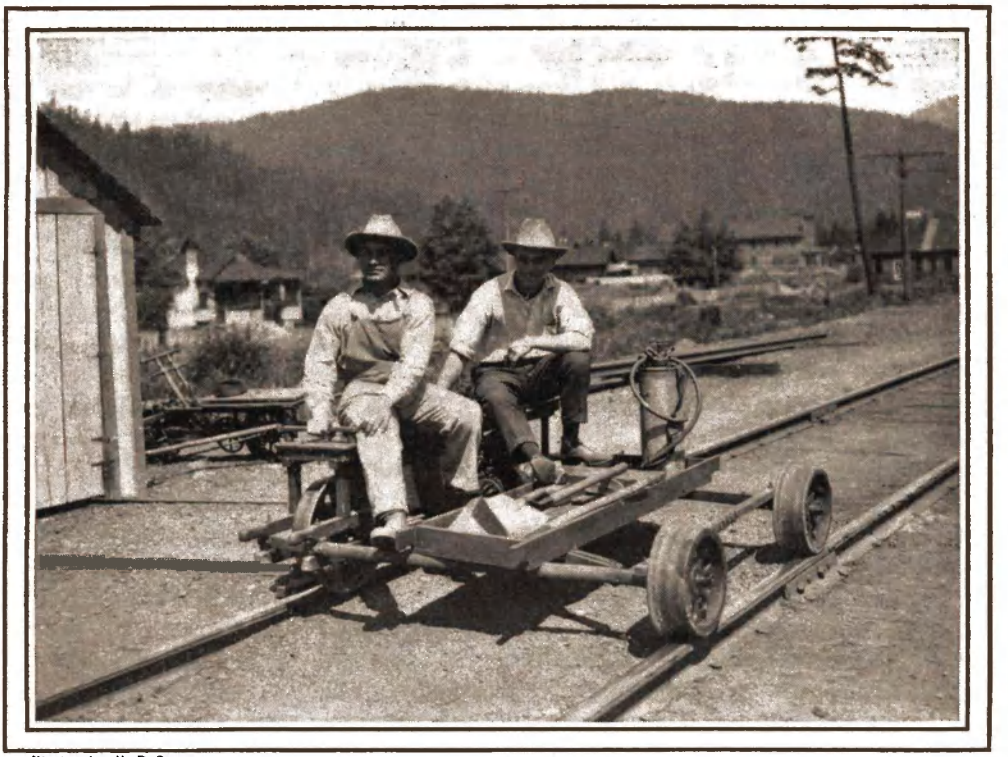
The New York Central, on the other hand, apparently considering its long search at an end, followed up the experimental installation prescribed by order of the Interstate Commerce Commission by equipping its main line between New York and Boston and Chicago and between Detroit and Chicago with an intermittent, inductive automanual type automatic train control. That is, this train control system is additional apparatus superimposed upon the automatic block signal system and operates in connection with it, functioning intermittently only as the apparatus on the engine passes over a fixed part beside the track.

This, the largest installation of automatic train control to date, covers 1,821 miles of line which includes 5,050 miles of track, or 14.6 per cent of the total, and 2,042 locomotives, or 20 per cent of the total in the whole United States.

The fact should be noted in this connection that automatic train control is not regarded as a substitute for anything, but merely as an additional safeguard superimposed upon others. Rule 99, regarding flagging, is still rigidly enforced, while train movements are controlled by automatic block signals as before.

Since all installations are officially regarded as experimental, monthly reports upon their performance are required by the Interstate Commerce Commission. As might be expected, these reports disclose the fact that some experimental installations work better than others.

An attempt to catalogue the devices proposed for automatic train control would only be wearisome. Such apparatus has been classified into seventeen distinct types covered by more than 3,600 live patents.



Photos by K. D Swan

SPEEDERMEN—THE BOYS WITH THE HEART OF A SMOKE-EATER AND THE PULSE OF STEEL IN THEIR SOULS

Speedermen

They Trail in the Wake of the Mountain Drags and Watch for Sparks That Spell Death to Forests

By John Adams

OUT where the railroads wind through the majestic. timbered valleys of the Bitter Root mountains, there is a hybrid branch of service that provides a daily diet of more thrills than could ever be packed into a movie melodrama. Even the title of those who compose its personnel suggests action, Speedermen. Speed is a prime requirement. The men are always in a hurry, for time, tide and forest fires don't wait for anybody.

The job is highly specialized. Speedermen are a carefully selected and efficient group of daring young men. The U. S. Forest Service hires them and trains them. The master mechanic of the division over which they operate gives them frequent examinations in the standard code of train rules.

Speedermen know that an extra has no time-table schedule and may be dis-

tinguished in the daytime by two white flags displayed on front of the engine. They know that a superior train is one having preference or precedence over another train and that superiority may be conferred by right, class or direction. They know that the hand pump which is part of their portable fire fighting equipment will handle a fire that doesn't exceed ten square feet in area, but that for bigger blazes trenches should be started with mattocks and shovels. Part of this stuff they learn from books and lectures. Experience teaches them the rest.

They work under the direction and supervision of the forest service, but they draw their pay checks from the railroads whose lines they patrol.

During the usually dry months of July, August and part of September, fire is perhaps the greatest menace that threatens the national forests in western Montana and across the Idaho Panhandle. Careless campers may be responsible for some of the conflagrations. Lightning starts others. And the railroads, in spite of every precaution they can take in the way of screens and spark arresters for their locomotive stacks, are not entirely guiltless.

In fact, during one recent season alone, some fifty-six full-fledged fires and no fewer than five hundred and twenty-one starts were reported to the forest supervisor at Missoula, Montana, as directly attributable to the railroads. These figures don't include the number of smaller blazes caught and extinguished by section hands and railroad employees along the right of way.

One such season's report is sufficient to explain why the speederman patrol was organized. Naturally the railroads offered every coöperation. They have to foot the bills for fires caused by their trains. Moreover, in many instances they own alternate sections of timber lands, the property having been granted them by the Government for putting through their lines in the early days of railroad building.

Forest fires are expensive things. Even the small or garden variety runs into money. The ultimate cost of the large ones is almost impossible to estimate. Cold-eyed auditors can take an adding machine and estimate pretty accurately the intrinsic value of the timber destroyed. They can tell to a penny just how much money was spent on the business of fighting and extinguishing any particular blaze.

But they can't translate into figures the intangible loss to the country at large that follows the denuding of a vast forest acreage by fire. The forests have a tremendous watershed value. Destroy the trees and the whole local weather conditions are changed sometimes. Rainfall is interfered with. The retention of ground moisture is disrupted, and mountain streams that formerly flowed all year round to water farm and grazing lands in distant valleys are upset in their routine.

There is another loss caused by these forest fires that can't be computed in dollars and cents damage, though it concerns the railroads themselves directly and more or less vitally. This is the recreation park value destroyed. During the summer railroads reaching and traversing these forests handle a considerable volume of tourist traffic. But whether their passengers are sightseers or campers, few, if any, of them are interested in paying railroad fares to visit a mountain of burned over timber.

Altogether speedermen, or anything else that will help to cut down the number of forest fires yearly are something that the railroads are in favor of. The

roads have stopped their men from cleaning locomotive grates while high-balling through the timber. In some instances they have changed the grade of fuel used on certain specific runs and by putting spark arresters on the locomotive stacks they have attempted to stop hot sparks from flying to the tinder dry undergrowth along their right of way. All these things and many more they have done for a long time. The speedermen are a comparatively recent innovation.

WHAT A FEW SPARKS DID TO A FOREST ON RAINY CREEK, MONTANA, IN LOLO NATIONAL FOREST

The First Speederman

"I tell you what we'll do," said the Forest Service. "We'll supply a selected group of men, skilled in the handling of forest fires at their outset. We'll give them such portable equipment and tools as can be carried on a light maintenance car. We'll instruct them in the importance of their jobs and turn them over to you. Two men to a car and you pay their salaries plus expenses. Also you'll have to supply them with the gas buggies."

"Okay," agreed the railroads, "but what'll we do with these boys? If they go chasing down the rails after fires, they'll interfere with our regular cards and probably get run over into the bargain."

"No, they won't. Not the fellows we'll send you," replied the Forest Service. "And as for pieing up your schedules, they won't do that either. Just have them follow along in the

WHERE THEY PREPARE THE GRUB FOR THE MEN ON THE FIRE LINES

wake of every train you send through the fire hazard areas."

"What?" exclaimed the railroads. "Listen, gentlemen, we've got operating troubles enough without a lot of gas buggies scattered up and down the tracks."

The gentlemen of the forest service wouldn't listen. They had coupled onto a good idea and they were determined to hang onto it.

"We're going to hand you exceptional boys for this speedermen trick," they insisted. "Young fellows with brains and no yellow in their makeup. Lads to whom action is life itself. We'll pick them for personality, too. They'll get along with everybody from the section hands up to yardmasters and division superintendents."

"It can't be done," groaned the railroads. They had had lots of experience with yardmasters and superintendents as well as with section hands.

"What's more," went on the Forest Service, "our speedermen will put out fires as fast as your locomotives can start them, and then come balling the jack down the line right behind the train they're supposed to trail."

The railroads thought it over. "Let's go," they said finally. "Only remember those chaps will have to know railroading as well as fire fighting."

"Don't worry," replied the Forest Service. "You can examine them yourselves."

Whereupon the forest service started out a few crews of speedermen equipped with axes, mattocks, shovels, a hand pump for fighting small fires with water and a lot of native horse sense. The railroads gave them light construction maintenance cars that

could be lifted off the rails easily when necessary, some sound advice about keeping out of the way of hot shots and a place to bunk near certain strategically located section houses.

As the danger of forest fires is much greater in the daytime, it was decided to give them daylight runs only and let them have their nights in, sleeping subject to call at any hour. They get called at any hour, too, especially when the nights are warm and dry; and they have learned to sleep with both palms outstretched, ready to grab the handles of their buggies and swing them onto the main line at a moment's notice. Forest fires are like colds. You've got to catch them quick to prevent serious trouble.

The speedermen soon proved how useful they were. More two-men speedermen crews were added. During the height of the danger season they now follow practically every train through certain sections of the forests. They don't necessarily work from division points on the roads. Their terminals are the edges of the danger district and they report daily to the telegraph agent at the nearest station, get their train orders and running schedules and then spend the day up and down the fire hazard zone.

As a rule they follow one train up and another down. Aside from stopping to put out fires started by the train ahead of them they have proved invaluable in other ways both to the forest service and the railroads. From their constant attendance on trains they soon get to know just which type and class of locomotive is the worst offender in the matter of spark throwing.

They have made suggestions about fuel. They learned that where the grades are steepest and the engines forced to puff hardest there are apt to

DIGGING A TRENCH AHEAD OF THE LINE OF FIRE IN THE MONTANA FOREST COUNTRY

be more fires started. And they realized that to avoid getting snarled up in train traffic, it is up to them to speed along as fast as possible to catch up with their particular train after having stopped to extinguish a minor blaze.

Fire Hazards From Mountain Jacks

In one instance speedermen spotted a certain pair of freight locomotives as inordinately prolific in the number of live sparks they scattered into the adjacent scenery. An excessive number of fire starts was directly due to each of these mountain jacks. Railroad officials decided that by hooking the culprits together and using the tandem to pull a single freight over the worst of the grades the number of blazes they started should be cut approximately in two.

The assumption was logical. Neither engine would have to puff so hard under the new system. Perhaps coupled together these bad boys of locomotive land could achieve a clean record, something neither of them ever had done alone.

The experiment was tried with the inevitable speedermen following along behind in their gas buggy. Puff—kerchug! Choo! wheezed the two engines straining round the curves on the mountain slope. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack rattled the fire fighting maintenance car a few hundred yards in the rear.

Suddenly one of the speedermen noticed a thin wisp of blue smoke curling up from a clump of dried leaves to the right of the tracks. The buggy was stopped. Both men jumped out, pumped water on it, moistening the ground all around thoroughly, and after a last survey to make sure all signs of fire were dead they hastened back to the rails.

They started the motor and hurried after Number Umpty Six.

"What in blazes!" said one of the fire fighters. "Stop the bus. There's another."

He pointed to a smoldering pile of dead brush a few yards up the mountainside.

"Yeh," said his companion, "and there's another just ahead. You take this one. I'll hustle along and catch that other baby. I'll wait for you there."

"Jake!" shouted the first man, plunging through the underbrush.

It was a broiling hot midsummer day. Both men were sweating and breathing hard by the time they had joined each other again.

"Get yours out?" asked one as he started up the maintenance car.

"You bet, kid," snapped the other man. "You know the orders. Don't leave 'em till they're OUT with a capital O-U-T!"

Both men laughed as they settled themselves on the hard wooden seat over the right hand rail.

"Have to make knots up the grade now. Umpty Six must be a couple of miles ahead," declared the man at the throttle.

They pushed half a mile farther on. Another fire. An open blaze this time, crackling its way in a red stream across the forest floor. It took all the frenzied effort both men were capable of to stamp out the stubborn blaze.

"Kid, if there's any more of them, they'll be roarin' plenty by the time we get to them. Couplin' that pair of mean jacks together just about doubled their trouble makin' output," said one of the speedermen.

"I'll say," snapped the other, wiping a pasty combination of dirt, ashes and perspiration off his face.

Two dog-tired fire fighters reported in at the end of that run. They had found out that pencil and paper logic doesn't always pan out in practice. But they considered themselves lucky. They had managed to put out every blaze without calling for help.

THE BIG TIMBER AT THE START OF A BLAZE

Speedermen are not always so lucky. Frequently they happen onto fires that are too large for them to handle unaided. In such cases they have authority to call out section bosses and start whole section gangs battling the flames. If the fire continues to spread beyond control they call on the forest service, which takes charge of the big blazes itself. But in any event and under all conditions the speedermen stay with a fire until relieved and it doesn't matter whether they've been on the job

six hours or thirty-six hours. They stick till it's out or until the forest supervisor officially relieves them.

The Big Fires

A spectacular blaze that got away from the speedermen occurred about twenty-five miles west of Missoula in the Lolo National Forest section on August 12th last year. Fourteen hundred and fifty acres burned out before the fire was brought under control, and the conflagration spread with such amazing rapidity that three hundred acres were aflame less than three-quarters of an hour after it started.

A branch line of one of the great transcontinental railroad systems runs westward from Missoula into the mountains and over Lookout Pass into Wallace in the heart of the Coeur d'Alene mining district in the Idaho Panhandle. There are some passenger traffic and considerable freight hauled over the route.

The country was exceedingly dry. There had been no rain for a month, and about three in the afternoon an eastbound freight was working its way toward Missoula. A fresh breeze fanned through the valley of the Clark Fork. The freight was trailed by a maintenance car and two speedermen.

A SCENE OF DEVASTATION IN THE COEUR D'ALENE NATIONAL FOREST, IDAHO PANHANDLE

Approaching Lothrop the line winds through a steep and narrow gorge in a general north and south direction. The sparkling waters of the Clark Fork flank the tracks on one side. On the other the forested walls of the gorge rise almost sheer above the rails.

The speedermen detected a small blaze a few hundred feet up the moun-

tainside. Some spark had evidently lodged in a pile of tinder-like brush. Because of the wind the smoldering brush whipped quickly into an open flame. Both men jumped to fight the fire. The freight moved on toward Huson.

The blaze was rapidly getting beyond control. Suddenly one of the men looked up. Over toward Huson clouds of smoke were billowing up among the trees.

"Lord! Another!" he shouted. "Stick with this. I'll go up there and see what I can do."

"Better send for help," advised his companion. "With this breeze we can't handle either one of these."

The first speederman nodded and dashed off. Within less than an hour great clouds of smoke could be seen mounting into the sky over Huson from the windows of the forest service headquarters in Missoula, a fourth of a hundred miles away. That night an eerie dull red glow filled the heavens in that quarter of Montana. Men and supplies were being rushed to Huson and Lothrop all through the night. There was no rest for any one, no surcease from the awful heat that filled the valley of the Clark Fork.

The wind had increased at sundown and it whipped live embers up the precipitous slopes, starting small fires in the draws and gulches nearly a mile away from the main blaze. Whenever these auxiliary fires were noticed men were sent after them. Sometimes the fires were caught before much damage was done; but on Mathews Gulch, three-quarters of a mile from the main conflagration, one hundred and sixty acres were burned off. The Lothrop blaze ruined five hundred and forty acres. The trees on it were mostly a cut-over young growth of yellow pine.

Up at Huson an inferno raged. The narrow gorge acted like a gigantic natural chimney and the flames licked their way straight to the mountain tops. Men tried to trench ahead of the living fire. The crackling of the blaze as tree tops flared like smoky torches was as steady as the drone and whine of a machine gun engagement.

Above the general din crashed the thundering detonations of giant trees as their charred trunks weakened and they broke and fell. A few men gave orders. "Get a ditch line through to the north ahead of that streak of flame." "Clear away that undergrowth." "More mattocks and shovels." "Bring that first aid stuff and a stretcher up here. Cripes! There's two of the boys knocked out by smoke and a fellow down the draw there laid out by a falling piece of burning timber."

The ditch line was dug, the undergrowth cleared away, the mattocks and shovels brought and the casualties cared for. Still the fire roared and licked its way through acre after acre of merchantable timber.

Again voices rose. "Almost daylight, ain't it? The glow is going from the sky. Only clouds of smoke up there now. How about those portable kitchens? Set up yet? Knock off the boys in shifts for hot coffee and sandwiches. Who is that down there swingin' the hoe? He looks groggy. The speederman that tried to stop this thing at four o'clock yesterday afternoon? For God's sake tell him to go somewhere and lie down for a while. He'll kill himself in this heat."

They dragged the speederman away from the fire's front lines. It was ten days before the blaze was finally brought under control, and even then it smoldered for nearly a month.

Surprising what a hot spark can do in forest country when it gets a chance, isn't it? At the start one man can stamp it out with his boot. Later—well, some of the experienced forest fire fighters will tell you that once a good blaze actually gets going nothing can stop it but a really first class rain storm.

One such fire swept the Kniksu forest some time ago. In a bulletin issued by the Missoula headquarters of the forest service there is a graphic description of the havoc wrought by lightning-started fires.

"The number of fires set by this storm will never even be closely approximated," says the bulletin.

"They kept showing up for days, and with every available man fighting them, the job of reporting them could not be thoroughly done. The smoke became so bad within a day or two that many of them probably never were seen, and since they eventually joined onto or were encompassed by the big fires they cannot be reported.

"Two days after the storm one hundred and twenty-five fires had been reported to the supervisor's office, twelve of which had already reached fifty acres or more in extent. The next day the number swelled to one hundred and forty-seven, with many more put out, but not reported. Four blazes had by this time covered over four hundred acres each. Two days later several passed the thousand acre mark. The weather continued dry and windy, and little progress was possible. It will be seen that the number of fires in this forest and rate of spread was such that it was humanly impossible to gain control of them.

"Men were not available and could not be secured, equipped and put on the ground fast enough to give them the slightest chance of success on those first four days. In the meantime the fires reached such size that the chance of controlling them was still more remote than ever.

"It became a question of weather rather than men."

In further describing the holocaust that swept through the Kniksu forest the report says that the forest for miles around was literally dotted with fires, as though the main conflagrations had sent their flames high overhead, dropping burning firebrands to set innumerable spot fires everywhere.

"More than a hundred of these," says the Forest Service, "were controlled in the first four days, which is an excellent record for the protection and crew men, but much of this success was purely paper profit, for scores of the fires which were controlled by the trying exertions of the men are now (a month later) within the vast burns resulting from the big blazes that could not be reached."

Six days after this great fire had started the air patrol estimated the burned area at more than twenty thousand acres. The number of men fighting the blazes was approximately eight hundred. A high wind soon doubled the area burned. Two weeks from the start of the blaze nearly fifty-five thousand acres, or about one-tenth of the whole forest, was aflame. More than a thousand men were in the field. The airplane patrol was hampered by smoke.

A fortnight later the fires were still raging. Fifteen hundred men were vainly trying to control them.

Which shows what a forest fire can do if it is given the breaks. It also explains why speedermen are so careful to stop and stamp out every curl of smoke they see winding upward from a bunch of dry leaves beside the tracks.

THE ENGINE MOVED FORWARD. THE JAWS OF THE TRAP SPRANG SHUT AND OSCAR WAS SLAMMED BACKWARD ACROSS THE REAR OF THE TENDER

Lure of the Rails

Fires of Hate Dance in Kimpton's Life and Sear His Heart, But Love and Devotion Heal the Burns

By E. S. Dellinger

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

OSCAR KIMPTON, Ozark farm youth, is engaged to marry Gladys Hensley, daughter of a neighboring farmer, whose fortunes have been vastly better than those of Oscar's parents. Old Cap Hensley, the girl's father, refuses to allow Gladys and Oscar to consider marriage until Oscar is able to own a piece of bottom's land. Oscar is about to achieve success when cholera kills off his pride herd of hogs and he is forced to go to Winfield and go braking for the G. & P. Gladys insists that he take her with him, but Oscar determines to get some money ahead and be sure of his job before marrying. Oscar

Continued at bottom of following page

VII

"CAN'T quit now, though. Not with the mortgage on the old home place. I've got to stay with it. Got to! Kill poor ole dad if he was to lose that place. Kill 'im sure as thunder."

The engine had come a little closer now. He was glad of it. He felt less alone. A few feet ahead he could see the top of another post on his left. He even imagined he could read the numbers it bore. He knew them by heart. Those numbers designated this particular bridge as "77C." The water became slightly shallower after he

passed this post, then deepened as he passed over "77B" and again at "77A."

For three miles he plunged boldly along when the solid roadbed was beneath him, felt his way carefully in crossing the buried bridges. A green light winked at him from somewhere ahead, went out for many seconds, then reappeared. Soon its steady glow reflected a shimmering strip of green along the water. *That* should be the west switch light at Enloe.

"Swoosh — swoosh — swoosh" he went through the water. The green light came nearer. Far beyond and above it a crimson one came in sight, and the path leading to it was red like blood. That should be the order board at Enloe. He was almost to the switch now. He was glad, for here he would let his train into another siding for No. 8 to go by. He could rest awhile. The light ahead of him went from red to green, stayed green for twenty seconds, blinked out, again shone red. Three times the signal was repeated. Then the red light threw its steady glow along the water. That changing signal said: "Come up the main line and get an order." Oscar stopped and swung his engineer a highball. The engineer answered with his whistle, and cracked the throttle.

As he neared the station, the operator came out on the platform with a tissue. Oscar took it from its hoop and read: "Extra 11 east will run ahead of No. 8, Enloe to Burlington. No. 8 proceed at safe distance without flagging."

"Looks like they was kinda tryin' to hang it onto you to save the porter to-night, don't it, pard?" questioned the operator.

Oscar looked gloomily down the water at the approaching headlight. He was tired—wished he had some coffee from his thermos bottle. But to stop here would send his buddy flagging back into the water. He replaced the order in its hoop, handed the hoop to the operator, waded once more into the center of the track and started forward.

"Hell, ain't it, pard?" sympathized the ham.

"It ain't heaven, feller."

Cheerless dawn broke over the bottoms. The heavens which all night had poured out their flood of waters, hovered low down next the river. The downpour changed to a dreary drizzle, and with the coming of day, the drizzle changed to a thick, white fog which shut them in as completely as the blackest night. The headlight was visible little more than a hundred feet away. The big Swede was crowding his flag more closely to keep him in sight, so closely that at times, Oscar wondered if the engineer could see him at all.

At seven thirty, they were in water less than knee deep. Oscar stumbled frequently now, almost fell headfirst in the water several times. By seven forty-five, he could again see the shiny

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battles the extra board, half starves and lives in an attic room in his struggle to get ahead. Months pass and Oscar is unable to hear from Gladys until one night in a restaurant near the yards he finds Gladys is a waitress. She explains that she could stand her father's tyranny no longer and had run away. Oscar and Gladys marry and the baby comes in the second May. An operation is necessary and Cap Hensley is appealed to for funds. He bitterly curses his daughter, Oscar and the child, and Oscar's father mortgages his little mountain home to enable his son to raise the needed money.

Gladys has improved and has just been out of the hospital a month, when the River Division is flooded and Oscar is called out for an extra. Gladys is fearful for his life, but Oscar laughs off the premonition of death and answers the call. Part of the division is entirely submerged and with the block signals out of service, Oscar is forced to wade in the water ahead of the drag.

tops of the rails with the water lapping about them. Shortly after eight, he came to the west switch at Burlington, opened the switch and stepped wearily aside to catch the engine as it passed him. The conductor, stalking in the gangway, took the lanterns and set them down.

"Damn a job railroadin'," was his greeting as Oscar climbed up beside him. "Me fer a farm. That's the life for me."

"Me, too, breathed Oscar, "if the good Lord ever lets me git one."

"Wouldn't neither one uh you birds quit this job for the best farm in the United States if yuh had it as a gift," scoffed the big Swede.

"Don't kid yourself," snapped Oscar. "I'd leave this cussed job so damned quick I'd knock the water all out uh Red River gittin' away."

"Yeah, an' then in thirty days you'd weep the water all outa yerself tryin' to git ole man Brown tuh give ye yer job back."

As they dragged by the telegraph office, the conductor, swinging down the steps, called back to his brakeman:

"Hey, Kimpton! Don't you go rawhidin' around lookin' this train over to-day. If Red an' me can't look out for it, we'll let it go to hell. Man ain't supposed to kill himself gittin' one uh these drags over the road."

"Thanks, Crane. You can sure have this one."

When Oscar climbed in beside the boiler head, he was sick and disgusted with the whole world and with his job in particular. But after he had changed into dry clothes and got outside a quart of hot coffee and four or five sandwiches, things looked a little better. After all, Gladys's gloomy prediction of "something going to happen" had not come true.

But the trip was not yet done.

Federal law—the hog law—will not permit a train or engine crew to work more than sixteen hours without rest. No matter how blind the siding in which they happen to be when the hog law gets them, they must tie up—must remain in that siding until they get a ride into terminal or until their rest is up.

When they pulled out of Burlington, they had less than four hours to make Neyberg, seventy miles away—a lucky four hours' run for a drag. But the despatcher in Winfield was giving them right over everything but first class in an effort to get them and their engine in before their time was up.

When the engineer whistled for Kenton, their coaling station, thirty miles later the fireman punched Oscar out of his doze and yelled into his ear:

"Hey, brakie! Take coal for me here, will yuh? I got to clean my ash pan or burn out a set uh grates. If I take coal an' clean the pan we can't make Logan fer No. 5, an' if we don't make Logan fer 5 the hogs'll get us sure's hell."

"You sure got your crust," snapped the brakeman.

"Suit yerself, deadhead. I can set up all day in a blind sidin' if you can."

Now taking coal is fireman's work—not brakeman's. Perhaps not four times a year does a brakeman attend to this job and then only in emergency. Still, as they pulled into Kenton, Oscar leaned back and called to the fireman:

"All right, big boy. I'll snatch your coal fer you. You dump yer ash pan an' make it snappy."

"That's the boy. Get me four tons."

When they stopped at the chutes, Oscar cut off the engine, climbed on top of the tender and signalled the coal tosser for four.

"Ain't got nothin' but a coupla eights shoveled," growled the black-faced tosser. "Every son-of-a-gun along here this mornin's wanted four tons."

Oscar looked down into the tender. Four tons would certainly empty from the chute easily. If he took the eight, he would just as certainly have to scoop an excess ton or two off the chute before he could again raise it. He looked at the tosser.

"Gimme your eight, then, dammit. The hogs'd get us before you snails could shovel up four tons to save your souls."

The tosser signalled the engineer ahead, stopped him under a chute. The big Swede, who had been busy inside the cab, did not notice that the brakeman was taking the coal. He swung down with his wrench and oil can, oiled the old jack on the right side, walked around the front end to the left, found a driver set so he had to move the engine to reach an oil hole. He put down his can and started for the cab. The fireman was busy raking ashes out of his pan.

"Goin' to move 'er up a notch, Slim," cautioned the hoghead.

"Let her go." The fireman said, forgetting Oscar taking coal.

Oscar, who had let the coal come down, was now standing in the back of the tender raking it off the chute. The heavy chute in front of him and the iron backboard of the tender rising knee high behind, stood like the open jaws of a huge trap. All it needed to spring was a slight forward movement of the engine.

Worn as he was by the long hours of nervous tension, the engineer, without signalling, kicked off his brakes and set his reverse. Oscar, unconscious of his danger, swung the scoop to and fro. Just as the big Swede slipped back his throttle, the coal tosser, looking down from the top of the chutes, let out a yell. But he was too late. With the hiss of steam, the grind of wheels and the crack of breaking timbers, the engine moved forward. The jaws of the trap sprang shut and Oscar was slammed backward across the rear of the tender, pinned by his legs between the tender and the chute, where he lay screaming.

The fireman leaped backward and hurried to the top of the tender. The coal tosser dropped down the chute and met him. The big Swede raced back from his engine and the three of them tried to release the injured man. But before he was free, the engineer must move the engine backward, crushing those broken legs still more.

As soon as the crew could release Oscar from between the tender and the coal chute, they carried him on No. 5, half conscious and suffering the most extreme agony, and rushed him to the hospital in Winfield. The first verdict of the company surgeons was "amputation." But after consultation, they determined to set both legs and put them in plaster casts in an effort to save them.

For months he lay there suffering. Twice they broke his right leg before they finally got it back to its natural shape.

He asked the company for financial adjustment for his injury, but the claim adjuster using as an excuse the fact that he had been injured while doing work which was the regular task of another employee, refused any further settlement than surgical and medical care. He might have collected had he taken the matter to court, but he had neither the inclination nor the money to fight the case. Consequently he took

his meager weekly accident insurance, far less than a living for Gladys, and made the best of it.

Of the two men who had been responsible for the accident, the fireman, a boomer, moved to another job and promptly forgot him. Swede Larson helped Gladys all he could, but since he had a large family of his own, he could do nothing toward paying Oscar's debts.

The mortgage on the furniture came due. The loan shark who held it sold Gladys out of everything except a few old worthless pieces which were not needed to meet the bill. The mortgage on the old home place became due months before he was out of the hospital, and he could not meet it. He worried constantly lest the bank should sell his father out, but Mr. Little kindly assured him that the note would be renewed until he could resume his payments.

Autumn passed. The winter dragged through. In the spring he went hobbling back to his barren home, to Gladys. She was thin from worry and under feeding. Dark circles had formed under her eyes. The dresses she wore were patched and the patches were wearing thin. She looked old. Oscar remembered now his dream on the night she had come to Winfield—the dream in which he had seen her standing in the doorway of his attic bedroom at Grandma Judson's singing:

> "Nobody knows how lean I am;
> Nobody seems to give a ——"

That dream had become almost a reality. But some folks *knew* and some folks cared. Friends brought them food daily, and friends encouraged them to hold on until he could return to his job. In fact, two months before he could have gone back into freight service, a passenger flagman, a young fellow whom he scarcely knew, even offered to trade jobs with him for sixty days in order to help him out. That is, the fellow would handle Oscar's regular work on freight, while Oscar took his far lighter task in passenger service. Friends like that made life worth living.

VIII

In September, though he still limped somewhat painfully, he returned to his regular freight job, braking behind for old Bill Crane. The two months' passenger work had enabled him to make another regular payment on the mortgage and let him pay some on his grocery bill. The hope, which "springs eternal in the human breast," was returning once more to him and Gladys. Surely, they thought, the spell of her father's curses to which they now unquestioningly attributed their misfortunes, would be broken.

October came with its chilly nights, its browning leaves, its ripening harvests, its fairs and horse races. And with it came a letter from Mother Kimpton. Oscar opened it, glanced over the cramped, misshapen characters, blotted here and there where great drops of water had dried on the single sheet, and a frown came over his face. Gladys, standing beside him, read it through with him. It began:

> Dear Sun:
>
> I rite to tell you that the bank has went broke an notifid us to pay the morgage in ten dase. Your pa has tride to borry the muny heer, but nobody wont let him have it. Onless you can git the muny sum way to pay it off, they aire going to sell the plase the 25 of this munth. I don't no what well do onless we go to the county farm, as we aint got no plase els to go. Yore poor ol pa is jest sick. Im

afraid hell dy rite away if we lusc the plase. For hevens sake try sum way to pay it off. I pray to God ever minute that you can git it sum way, for onless you do, yore pa haint got long fur this wurld. I will close this time and hop to see you pay it off, rite away.

MOTHER.

They read the letter through three times. It couldn't be true. Yet it was true. Mother Kimpton had written it, and Mother Kimpton didn't lie. They were stunned by the suddenness of it. Baby tugged and chattered unnoticed about their knees. Gladys drew Oscar's white face down and kissed it.

"Perhaps you can borrow the money here in Winfield, dear," she comforted.

"I don't believe there's a chance, but I'm going to try."

He went first to the bank where he kept his checking account, but since he had nothing to offer as security and since his deposits during the last two years had not been such as to warrant confidence, they refused him the loan.

Tom had been out of service for nearly three months for tearing up a string of freight cars. He was on the ragged edge of poverty and no help could be expected from him. Oscar went to Jim.

"Why, I couldn't raise three hundred cents, kid," denied Jim. "I just borrowed all the bank would loan me on my place to pay doctor bills with. I couldn't raise it to save my soul."

"The place is goin' unless I can raise the money, Jim," declared Oscar gloomily.

"Let it go an' quit worryin' your head off over it. Dad and mother'd both be a damned sight better off if they lost it. Maybe they'd come on into Winfield where we could take care of 'em."

"But they don't want to come into Winfield, Jim. They're tied down to that old place, an' nothin' short of death'll ever tear 'em away from it, dad, especially. If that place sells, he's goin' to lay right down an' die, an' I'll be his murderer."

"Murderer, my eye! You done all you could do—all anybody could do. You can't help it because you ain't a millionaire. If the place sells, let it sell."

When he returned home that afternoon, blue and discouraged, Gladys met him at the door, a hopeful smile in her tired eyes. She had been packing her grip.

"Where you goin', kid?" anxiously.

"I'm going down to dad's an' make him let me have that money, Oscar."

"He won't do it."

"He will if I go to him and tell him what it's for. That money was borrowed for *me*. He can loan it to us until we can pay him back. There's not a bit of sense his acting the way he has. I'm going to get that money."

"You'd better not go, dearie. You won't get a cent an' it'll just hurt you."

"Hurt, my foot! It's not going to hurt me half as bad as it'll hurt father an' mother Kimpton to lose their place."

She stooped over and closed the grip, then, eyes flashing, angrily continued.

"I don't see why you didn't go to him and get it in the first place instead of having your father mortgage the roof over his head for it. Stubbornness, nothing but stubbornness. *You're* as stubborn as he is."

Oscar opened his mouth to speak, to tell her of his trip to her father's while she was in the hospital, then snapped it shut. She might succeed where he would fail. He would let her have her way.

Consequently, when she passed be-

tween the stone lions and up the deserted walk, covered now with yellow walnut leaves, she did not know that he had ever been there. Old Cap Hensley was not at home when she arrived. He was down at the Spur loading two cars of thoroughbreds to take to the state fair. Tennessee Mary saw her coming up the walk with the baby. She came tottering down the walk to meet her crying. Tennessee Mary was glad to see her, at least. Tennessee Mary set the table for her dinner.

Old Cap was late getting home. Gladys was shocked at the changes which showed in him. His face was thin and pallid and wrinkled like burned leather. His goatee was brown and unkempt. His clothes, once kept spotlessly clean and neatly pressed, were dirty now, and hung on him with a slovenliness she had never known. The old man came stalking into the dining room, saw the table set for three.

"Who's here to-day, Mary?" he demanded suspiciously.

Mary made no reply. She was taking hot biscuits from the oven.

"I said who's here, Mary?" he fairly shrieked.

"It's me, father," spoke Gladys, coming into the hall with the baby.

"You!" he snorted. "What the hell you doin' here? Didn't I tell you never to darken my door again?"

"Yes, but I'm here, and I intend to eat lunch with you." She came into the dining room.

The old man stood trembling, hesitating between two impulses—whether to accept her or to drive her from him. But four years' constant hating had smothered the last germ of kindliness in a self-centered disposition, had left him powerless to throw off that hatred now.

Straightening the frail figure, he pointed a shaking finger at the door.

"Go!" he quaked.

Gladys stood still. He licked his ashen lips and spoke again, rapidly, his eyes wild and staring.

"I warned you when you married into that Kimpton tribe they didn't have no stability nor no business jedgment nor no luck. I told you then you'd come home beggin' money before you was ten year older. You—you sent him, first, sent him because you was ashamed to come yourself."

Gladys started, then understanding came to her.

"I told him when you sent him two year ago that if he ever stuck his head inside my door agin I'd blow it off with a shotgun. Now here you are—you! You took him instid uh a man that could make a livin' fer you. Now go back to him an' stay with 'im. Git!"

She stood, the baby behind her on the floor, walked toward him, keeping her eyes fixed hypnotically on his wizened face. Her own was as pale as his and just as determined.

"Listen to me, father. Did you say my husband came to you two years ago!"

"You know he did."

"Did you know why he came, father?"

She ignored his belligerent attitude.

"I—I don't care a damn, an' I don't care now. You go!"

"Listen to me, Cap Hensley. You can't bully me like you used to. My husband came to you two years ago to try to get money to save my life when I was dying. *You* refused him. He went to his father. His father mortgaged the roof over his head to get money—money to save *me*. To save *me!* Do you understand?

"The mortgage is due, and the sher-

iff will sell that roof unless I get three hundred dollars from you. I want it—not as a favor, but as a right. You can cut me off without a cent in your will, but I want three hundred dollars, *now*."

The old man laughed, one mirthless, maniacal, croaking laugh. Then lifting a palsied hand, he pointed again toward the door.

"Not one damned cent do you git, *now*. My will gives you one dollar. May it burn the soul outa you an' your wuthless Kimpton. May it hang about the neck uh that kid uh yourn like a millstone draggin' him down to the hottest pits of hades. Git out of the house and stay out!"

Bringing his right hand down, he struck the two extra plates from the table with one sweep, ground them on the floor beneath his heel.

And his daughter, knowing that her father, his heart cankered with bitter hatred, and shriveled with disappointment, was entering into a state little short of insanity, returned sorrowing to Winfield.

The next ten days were days of deepest depression and bitterest grief. When Oscar was at home, he moved about as if in a trance. His face took on a heavy stubble of beard shot through with coal dust and grease which he forgot to shave or wash away. His eyes were bloodshot and staring. His forehead became penciled with deep lines traced there by the relentless hand of misery.

He did not again mention to Gladys the mortgage nor the sale of the place, but at night, when lying upon his back staring up into the darkness he dozed for a moment, he mumbled always of mortgage, of murder, of "killing poor old dad." Food went untouched. Meal after meal they sat down; drank cups of strong coffee, and arose to continue their miserable existence.

IX

On the evening of the twentieth, five days before the old place was to be sold, he was called for a lumber drag east. When he kissed Gladys good-by, he held her longer than usual, seemed hesitating as if wanting to speak.

"What is it, dear?" she queried softly.

"Oh, nothin'," he mumbled. "Nothin' only—only I've got—got the feelin'—the feelin' that—oh, hell! What's the matter with me? Fergit it!"

He fairly flung her from him and hurried up the street. She stood in the door watching him until he disappeared in the yard office, reached both hands blindly toward him, then turned back, choking, convinced in her heart that not again would she see him alive.

The trip down was uneventful. He pulled into Neyberg about four o'clock in the morning, and was called for an extra west about midnight. Coming down to the caboose, he mechanically hung out his markers, lighted his lanterns, took two of them and started forward alongside the train. The full moon rode high above the smoke clouds curling upward from fifty steaming engines in the terminal.

He walked along flashing his lantern upon seal and card of each car as he passed it, checking mechanically the contents and destination.

Somewhat behind the middle of the train, were several cars of gasoline and benzine, coming out from a distributory in St. Louis. Ahead of these were two empty stock cars with a coating of hay over the floor. Ahead of these empty stock cars was a car of explosive billed to Joplin, on its side a big

placard, an extra placard, bearing warning: "This car loaded with explosive! Handle with care! Keep lights and fires away!"

"Dynamite or blastin' powder," thought Oscar, forgetting his worries for a second.

The two cars ahead of the explosive were loaded with horses. When he looked at the card, he stopped, flashed his light into the car, looked back at the head, then peered through the slatted sides. These cars were billed to Hensley Spur!

"Comin' back from the fair, huh? Some uh ole Cap Hensley's stuff. Damn his soul!"

He reached a hand into the car, patted a soft nose stuck down near an opening. Five years on the rail had not deadened his love of animals one iota.

As he passed by the second car of horses, he lifted his lantern and looked into it. The rear end was cut off from the rest by a pair of heavy wooded bars. In it was a bed, dingy, ill-smelling, where the man in charge of the horses slept during the trip.

"Wonder if the old devil hisself still rides with his horses, or if he's got a helper now. Hope he does! I'd hate like hell to have to ride the crummy with him from here to Winfield!"

Oscar walked on up to the yard office, handed Crane his lantern. Old Cap Hensley was talking to the conductor. He whirled, facing his daughter's husband. For the first time in two years they faced. Neither spoke. The old man's face changed from red to purple and back again. Then with a snort, he spun on his heel and strode into the yardmaster's private office.

"Hey, you!" he croaked to the burly figure behind the desk.

The yardmaster quit writing and looked up.

"Is—is that wuthless cuss workin' on this train my stock's supposed to go out on?"

"What worthless cuss?" inquired the yardmaster.

"Him!" Old Cap pointed a bony, shaking finger at Oscar.

"Kimpton's parlor man on this extra, if that's what you want to know," replied the yardmaster, turning back to his writing.

"Then, by God! You'll put my stock into another train!" stormed the old man. "My stock ain't goin' out on no train that pays him money to handle it. You—"

"Listen, Mr. Hensley," barked the burly yardmaster. "This train's made up. Your stock's in it. This crew's called to handle it, an' Kimpton's goin' out on this train. If you don't like it, you can go to hell."

The yardmaster turned again to his desk. The old man walked up and down the floor popping his fists together. He swore he'd report the matter to the general manager—swore he'd ship his stock over another road. He raved until Crane got the orders and started for the engine. Oscar watched, determined that if Cap Hensley started to the caboose, he would ride the head end and let the head shack brake behind this trip. He didn't want to be in the caboose with that old maniac. But the old man went straight to his horse cars, was inside when the train was ready to move.

Oscar stood alone on the rear platform of the caboose until the conductor caught it pulling out of the yard.

"Old boy up ahead seems to kinda have it in fer you, Kimpton," Crane laughed, lighting a match. "Used to know him somewhere, did you?"

"Mrs. Kimpton's his daughter, Bill," softly.

Crane upset his pipe and burned his finger, looked at Oscar leaning dejectedly against the rear end of the caboose.

"Oh!"

A dozen telegraph poles slipped by, he passed that car he heard the hiss of escaping air.

Again and again, passing on by the horse cars, he glanced inside, where in the dim light of the lantern he could see the withered form of Cap Hensley

"IS THAT WUTHLESS CUSS WORKIN' ON THIS TRAIN MY STOCK'S SUPPOSED TO GO OUT ON?"

while the train picked up speed. Crane tamped a new load into his pipe.

"Must be some mistake in that girl's pedigree, Kimpton. Shorely must be some mistake."

Several times during the night, Oscar walked his train waiting in the siding.

Early in the evening, he found a pair of hot wheels on one of the empty stock cars behind old Cap Hensley's outfit. A leak in the branch pipe leading to the brake cylinder was keeping the brakes set. He cut this car out. Moving forward, he discovered a leaky hose coupling between the head stock car and the powder car. He tried a new gasket, but it didn't help. Every time

on the dirty cot. The old man was staring wildly about him as if listening for some call. Oscar felt something akin to pity creeping over him, pity for the man who had by stubbornness and greed brought misery into the lives of himself and his daughter, where happiness might have been.

But if Cap Hensley had brought misery to Oscar and Gladys, had refused aid to his own father when aid was due, then his acts of selfishness and obstinacy had, like a boomerang, struck back at their door. One look into that face, seamed with lines of hatred and malice, told too clearly of his great torture. Torture which would not end even in death.

Returning from his last trip over the train, he sat in the cupola pondering these things—oscillating between human pity for and bitter resentment toward the man who, to him, seemed responsible for his suffering. The night wind blew in through the open window, cooled his aching brain. He thought of his father and the note, and shuddered. Within two hours the dawn would come, and with the dawn, his crew would leave the train in the yards of Winfield.

As they approached the hilly region near Winfield where the road swings down to follow the windings of Clever Creek, they ran into stretches of fog. Sitting in the cupola, the brakeman watched great banks of white come to meet him out of the moonlight, saw the cars ahead go plowing into them, saw a blank white wall close in about him. Then, without warning, he would pass from fog to moonlight as they climbed a slight rise. The railway here winds in and out through the hills, crossing deep ravines on high trestles, crawling through ugly gashes cut in the flint. As they passed through one of these cuts, Oscar sniffed the air whipping in at the cupola window, stuck his head out and sniffed again. Then swinging down to the floor of the caboose, he passed outside, stood on the rear platform sniffing, sniffing. Odor of burning grease! Journal grease! Somewhere ahead was a hot box.

"Got a hot 'un over there, Crane," he called to the watching conductor.

"Yeah, I been smellin' it fer the last five miles."

"Hell yuh have? I jist now caught it."

"Thought we'd run it till it started blazin'."

"Not to-night, Cap. Not on this outfit. Might be a box on that car uh powder fer Joplin fer all we know. No flirtin' with the undertaker this trip."

He got his lantern from its hook under the cupola window, returned to the rear platform to give a stop sign, but the fog was so thick he saw it was useless. Coming inside, he twisted down the brake valve, the conductor's valve, until air came hissing out. The brakes set on the train. Two short blasts of the whistle notified him that the engineer had caught his signal and was taking control of the brakes. He set the valve back in position, took his pacing hook and pail of dope from the locker, a pail of water from the barrel under the cupola, and his lantern. Thus armed, he marched forward, leaving the conductor to hold down the rear.

The night was still. Not a breath of air was stirring the yellow oak leaves. In stopping they had run out of the fog bank, and the moon shone now above the tops of the squat oaks whose shadows lay at the foot of the embankment.

Oscar moved forward, stopping to feel of each journal box as he passed it. Odor of burning grease became stronger. His partner's light from the head end came nearer. When he was even with the cars of gasoline, he saw his partner's light stop.

"Here it is!" called the kid brakeman. "One uh these empty stock cars."

X

Oscar hurried forward. The head brakeman had brought a pail of water from the engine. They jerked up the lid of the box, dashed cold water into it. Oscar pulled out the burning packing and stuffed in the fresh dope he had brought from the caboose. The head brakeman stood alternately watching him and gazing about. Soon he

punched Oscar in the ribs and jerked his thumb significantly toward the inside of the car. Oscar raised his head to look in the direction he had indicated. A hobo was sitting up inside, furtively watching them while they packed the box.

"Cyan't yuh give a fella a fag, pard?" begged the bum, reaching a hand through the crack in the car.

The brakeman took a cigarette from his package and dropped it gingerly into the filthy claw outstretched to receive it. Beside the fag he dropped a

WITH HIS FOOT OSCAR SHOVED THE KNUCKLES SHUT TO PREVENT RECOUPLING

"What you doin' in there, 'bo?" questioned Oscar.

"Tryin' to git out to Frisco to see me mother," whined the 'bo.

"'Spect you'd better unload, fella. Here's a damned good place while we're stopped."

"Aw, don't make a fella git off here, pard. This ain' no place to ditch a man way out here in these God-fersaken woods. Can't yuh let a fella ride on into Winfield?"

Oscar did not answer. The 'bo, emboldened by his silence, came over to the side of the car directly above them. The head man took out a package of "Giraffes" and lighted one, stood puffing it while Oscar finished packing the box.

match. The bum eagerly lighted the cigarette, tossed the match outside, then returning, lay down in the hay.

"You better git on over toward the head end, kid," advised Oscar. "I'm goin' to hand the hogger a highsign in about a minute. An' say," he added, "look back this way once in a while; I'm goin' to ride out here an' watch this box. It's hotter'n the kindlin' uh Hades; an' if it was to start blazin' here with powder on one side of it an' gasoline on the other, there'd be business fer Satan."

The brakeman grabbed up his lantern and started running toward the engine. Soon Oscar straightened up and gave a highball. The engineer whistled in his flag. Crane swung a

highball from the caboose. Oscar answered the signal, passed it on to the engineer. With a rattle and clang of drawbars and brake rigging, the train got under way.

Oscar, climbing to the top, sat on the running board, his lantern between his feet, rubbing his aching legs. Four cars ahead, a blur of light, indistinct and yellow, marked the presence of old Cap Hensley and his horses. He fell to speculating on the value of those horses, some of which he knew to be worth up in the thousands. Thousands that by rights his wife should share, yet he could not raise three hundred dollars to pay the mortgage on the old home place.

"Ain't fair," he muttered. "Life an' luck ain't fair. What good does it do a feller to work on day an' night, day an' night—poor old dad!"

The lights of the engine sank into the curving cut at the top of Clever Creek Hill. He watched the green marker on the right side of the caboose change its angle as the car he rode took the curve, saw it blink out as he himself plunged into the cut. They tipped over the grade. The slack bunched with a jam. A thin veil of fog came between him and the blurred lights of the hay burner four cars ahead. The fog veil thickened, became a curtain. For fifteen miles he would not see the light from engine or caboose again. He shivered. October's chill was in the air.

For five miles he sat thinking, scarcely moving. For the first time in days he was becoming sleepy. He nodded. Jerked himself awake, dozed for a few seconds. The jerk of the train rounding a sharp curve awakened him. The train was running forty miles an hour down the grade. They were running past a forest fire! Were they?

He stumbled to his feet. A light was playing through the fog on both sides of him. That box was blazing, he thought. There came a scream from the car beneath his feet. He hurried anxiously to the end of the car, started down the ladder. When he was half way down, he heard another scream, saw a flash as the hobo leaped through the side door of the stock car and went rolling down the embankment. The smouldering cigarette had fired the hay in the bottom of that car.

Even in the seconds while Oscar clung to the ladder watching, the flames spread over the bottom until they covered half the car. They surged upward almost to the roof, outward through the slatted sides, first one way, then the other.

His first impulse was to swing in between the cars, close the forward angle-cock, pull the coupling lever and cut off the burning cars from the head end of the train. That was impulse. Next came thought. Gasoline behind the fire! Explosives ahead. Bill Crane on the crummy! Cap Hensley ahead! To hell with Cap Hensley! But there were horses—he remembered the filly with the soft nose.

He clung to the side of the car, hesitating. The fire was leaping backward as if running through tinder. Already sparks had ignited the hay in the second empty stock car. Flames were pouring from its end. Sparks were flying over the tanks of explosive oil.

On any train, a man on the bottom step of a side ladder can, by simply lifting a lever, easily uncouple the car, thereby dividing the train into two parts—provided always that the pin is not held tight by draft from in front or shoving from behind. On a heavy grade, either up or down, it can't be done, especially near the center of the

train. But running over short hills and across narrow sags, where the grade changes frequently, it can be done at any change of grade. Once the car is uncoupled, the air hose will uncouple itself, automatically setting the brakes on both ends of the train.

XI

OSCAR hurried up the ladder, hand over hand, raced back over the tops of the two burning cars. They rocked and careened from side to side as they took the curves. He was nervous from his days of worry and little sleep. He feared Bill Crane in the caboose might smell the smoke and pull the air. That would mean destruction. He dropped monkey fashion down the ladder between the stock car and the first oil car. To reach the anglecock—the cut-out in the brake line—he had to cross the train or else swing in between the cars and do his work.

Quickly he swung in, glanced down at the drawbars. The position of the drawbars indicated that the train was on down grade. Good!

He jerked the head anglecock to closed position, reached for the coupling lever. It came up solid. The pin was held by shoving from behind. With his right hand he tugged at the coupling lever, with his left he clung to the car ahead. Flames whipped over hand and arm, shot into his face. He flinched, but he dared not let go. To fall here meant death. To let the slack go out with the lever down meant destruction for his train. Seconds passed. Air leakage set the brakes on the rear end of the train. The knuckles clicked and jostled. The lever lifted with a jerk, almost shaking him from his hold. Air hose snapped apart. The brakes on the rear cars went into emergency. The burning cars pulled away from it.

That was easy! A burned hand, nothing more! No danger now from gas explosion.

He went back up the ladder two steps at a time, sprang forward. The roof boards were now on fire. Tongues of flame shot up through them, whipped over from the sides; and the wind from the speeding train took a stream of sparks and flame far back along the track. Smoke blinded him until he could scarcely find the swaying, clattering gaps at the ends of the car. He crossed them by instinct.

If only he could cut off the two oblongs of living flame, now, and let them stop themselves as the others had done. That should be easy, because on the head car the wind would be whipping the fire backward. He would be out of it. He crossed the two burning cars, dropped down the ladder, swung in between the cars to close the forward anglecock. The wind, sucking in, had dragged flame against the end of the powder car and scorched the boards. The rosin was smoking, might burst out blazing any instant. He got a whiff of burning rubber. If that air hose burned in two, nothing could save those cars of horses from destruction.

He grabbed the anglecock, hot now to his touch, surged at it, yanked at it, swore softly. The anglecock was stuck. It took him too long to shift it from open to closed position.

"Wham! Clack! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

The brakes on the burning stock cars went into emergency, took the slack out of the coupler with a bang. He could not pull the pin. He clung to the lever, trying to lift it. The leak in the hose coupling, which amounted to little when the train was all together, was now slamming the brake on that car into emergency as soon as the air supply from the engine was cut off. He

tried once more to make the cut; but before he could let go the anglecock and grab the coupling lever, the slack went out of the car and held tight. With three hands he might make the cut—with two, never!

He clung to the ladder, thinking. The cars rocked and swayed on sharp curves. Smoke shot back, whipped into his face. Wheels beat out their incessant " clk-clk, clk-clk " on bending rail joints. They boomed over short trestles, swished through gray-walled cuts. But high above all other sounds arose the roar of the raging fire. Its lurid glare penetrated the fog wall about them to a distance of perhaps a dozen car lengths. Whirling, eddying shadows, flitting like ghosts in the changing glow, raced with them, pursued them.

In his horse car, Cap Hensley had, at the first burst of blaze, cursed the company for its carelessness. But as the miles swished behind them, as he realized the peril he was in, as he saw the trainman working fearlessly about the burning train, he ceased his cursing, tried to get out of the side door and on top of the train. Time was when from a stock car that would have been easy, but now old age had stiffened his joints and sapped his meager strength.

Years of hating had left his hands helpless with the palsy. He tried the end doors, but they were both stuck, immovable. Returning to the side door, he stood like a condemned criminal hopeless in his burning prison, watching. He recognized his daughter's husband—the man who had appealed to him for help. He remembered those appeals now, but he forgot his bitter answers.

" Oscar!" he croaked, madly waving the old hay burner. " Oh, Oscar! Fer God's sake come an' save these horses. I'll give you anything—anything—everything! Oh, my God! My God!"

But not a sound surged back through the clatter and clang of the rushing train and the maddening roar of the flames. Almost had Oscar Kimpton forgotten the existence of old Cap. Once he had decided to cut out those cars and prevent the wreck, he forgot all about the reasons, the impelling motives which first determined him to do it. The thing he did was in his line of duty—it was in the game, and he was playing the game.

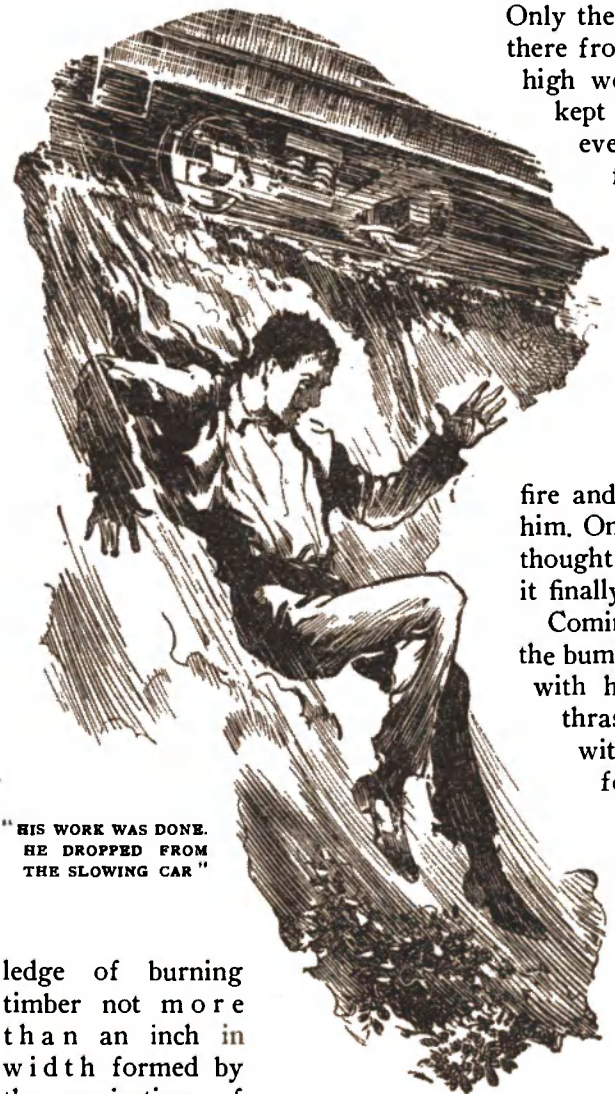
During the seconds while he clung to the side ladder, plan after plan for preventing the threatened disaster thrust itself forward only to be weighed and discarded. Several of them offered chance, but the chance was slim. One way seemed certain, and that way was a way of torture—maybe death. That way, Oscar Kimpton chose.

Underneath every freight car, half way from end to end, is a little lever which extends from the brake cylinder of the car to its edge. By holding this bleed cock open for a brief time, a trainman can release the air brake, no matter how hard it is set. The air brake released, the car can then be cut off and stopped with hand brakes. Every time a trainman " kicks " or " drops " a car into a housetrack, he does exactly this thing—but not with the train running, and not in a hell of flame.

Oscar closed the anglecock on the rear end of the powder car. All excitement was gone from him. He moved now with the precision of a well-oiled machine. If he succeeded in getting those cars cut out of his train without a wreck, he would get some merit marks from the superintendent, would be paid for lost time, and might

get a bonus. If he failed, his wife would surely get eight or ten thousand because he had been killed in performance of duty. Damn the difference!

Once more the brakes jammed on. He swung from powder car to stock car, went cooning his way along the



"HIS WORK WAS DONE. HE DROPPED FROM THE SLOWING CAR"

ledge of burning timber not more than an inch in width formed by the projection of the sill of the car beyond the side wall. His leather gauntlets were already scorched, almost burning. Burns were on his face and his arms where his jumper had caught fire. The heat made them pain him. But their pain was soon sunk beneath the surge of other pains which came from new burns.

Fire licked up about his knees. The soles of his feet became blistered and his shoe soles were burned to a crisp. Only the dew on his overalls gathered there from a night of walking through high weeds along the right of way, kept them from blazing at once, for every square inch of board surface on that car was burning. His feet moved along a burning sill. His hands worked in and out through fire and his fingers gripped boards which were blazing.

Most of the time the wind was favorable. Several times it whipped fire and smoke into his face, stifling him. Once it stayed with him until he thought he must give up and fall, but it finally shifted and he moved on.

Coming to the center door, which the bum had left partly open, he clung with his hands, let himself down, thrashed about beneath the car with his feet until he secured footing on the truss rod and, standing upon it, holding with one hand, found the bleed cock.

Soon sound and feel of grinding brakes stopped. The car was running free. Hand over hand, foot ahead of foot, he painfully retraced his steps. His head was dizzy. Sometimes he missed his footing, clung to the burning slat, and struggled forward. Suffering, enduring, moving al-

most by instinct, his overalls now burning at the waist, his right sleeve on fire, he came at last to the end of the car. He tried to see the end of the powder car, to see if it blazed, but his eyes were almost blinded. They were as if seared by hot irons.

Gropingly he found the coupling lever. It was still fast. The cars were still whipping along at better than forty. Soon the drawbars clicked. The pin came free. He lifted it, thrust a foot in between the cars and shoved the knuckle closed to prevent recoupling.

Then in blind agony, he found his way to the top of the car, groped for the brake, set it, felt the speed decreasing. His work done, all sense gone but the sense of his wretchedness, he once more descended the ladder and dropped from the slowing car.

Four miles away the forward half of the train began climbing out of the valley upon a piece of straight track. The engineer looked back several times, kept watching more frequently as he moved farther up on the straightaway. Presently he called across the cab to the head brakeman:

"Say, kid! Look out over there an' see if you see the marker on that side."

The brakeman looked back, leaned far out of the window and looked again.

"Nope. No marker showin' yet."

Swede Larson shoved up his throttle and set the air.

"That's funny," he said. "Damned funny. We lost a hell of a lot uh tonnage somehow."

The piece of a train ground to a stop.

"Don't see how a man could lose his rear end without settin' the air, but we've shore'n hell done it."

He and the brakeman, leaving the fireman on the engine, ran back along the train. When they approached the forward car of horses, they met old Cap Hensley coming ahead with the old hay burner in his hand. He was shaking until he could scarcely stand.

"What happened to the hind end o' this train, mister?" queried the hog-head.

"I—I don't know, exactly. There was a fire. Some—some cars caught afire an'—an' a feller fooled around with 'em till they was about burned up. Then we run off an' left 'em burnin' an' I never seen him any more."

XII

An hour later, with the dawn breaking over the wooded hills, old Bill Crane and the head brakeman from a following freight met the returning head end of his own train where the burned cars had left the rails. Oscar was not with them. The three trainmen, followed by Cap Hensley, went back a mile looking on the north side of the track. Not having found trace of him, they were returning on the south side. It was daylight now.

The first sign they found was a jumper burned to a cinder. Down in the ditch at the foot of the embankment, they found the charred remains of a half burned pair of overalls. A little farther, as they approached a pond formed by the damming of a shallow ravine, they came upon a huddled, shivering, moaning heap lying in its edge, where in his misery Oscar had dragged his burned body seeking relief in the muddy water.

The hair was singed from his head almost as if it had been shaven. The shoe soles were charred and cupped. The underwear was scorched full of holes, but in the blistered body the heart of a man still beat.

"Is—is it him?" quavered Cap.

"Yes, it's him," snapped old Bill Crane. "An' you'd better git down on yer knees an' thank yer God—if you got any—that yuh had a son-in-law with courage enough to go down intuh hell an' pull yuh out."

XIII

WHEN Oscar came out of the hospital in December, he did not return to the barren little shell which he had left on the night of his last run. He went to a new home—a home furnished with the best that Cap Hensley could buy for his daughter in Winfield. He was called up shortly for his conductor's examination. He passed. Fickle fortune was once more smiling upon them. Friends who had sympathized with and helped them in adversity, rejoiced with them now in prosperity.

Cap, busy on the farm, did not visit them from the time of Oscar's return until Christmas eve. Oscar had just come in from his first trip as conductor. He proudly removed his new trainbook from his pocket, his badge from his hat, his conductor's punch from his grip, showed them to his wife and laid them on the library table.

These were, to him, symbols of achievement. They stood for those years during which he had worked through rain and storm hoping for better things. Then he fished from his pocket his first order, crumpled as it was, and handed it to his wife with the injunction: "Put it away fer the kid."

A big car drove up to the curb. Cap Hensley alighted from it, came tottering eagerly up the walk. Gladys saw him first, pulled herself loose from her husband's arms, and met the old man at the door. Oscar stood by the library table uncertain what to say or do. The old man came in shaking like a leaf. Oscar turned to meet him, a red, scarred hand stretched out in welcome. Old Cap drew from his pocket a folded paper and held it toward Oscar.

"The Jones place, son. You aimed to buy it. Here's the deed."

Oscar dropped his hand. Gladys stood looking on. The smile which had formed about the old mouth began to fade away.

"Why, we—we can't do anything like that, Mr. Hensley," stammered Oscar. "We—"

"But you've got to take it, Oscar. The deed's done made out an' recorded. I want you should move down right away."

"I can't take it as a gift, dad. I got to work fer what I make."

"It ain't a gift I'm givin' yuh, boy. It's a debt I'm payin'."

"You mean that night we come up from—from Neyberg an'—"

"No, I—I don't mean that debt—"

The eager anticipation was all gone from the old face now. In its place was a look of deepest misery. The wrinkled hands shook and twitched and fumbled with the great gold watch fob dangling from the sunken chest. He shifted his eyes from Oscar to Gladys, from Gladys down to the baby, from the baby to the floor.

"Yuh see, Oscar," he stammered. "It's like this—I—thought—I thought I could git by without ever tellin' yuh—you an' Gladys."

The couple stared at him. He continued.

"But I can't. I can't. It's got to come. That Jones place sorta belongs to you two, I reckon."

The voice was a sobbing whisper.

"When I told you you could have

Gladys if you got a bottom farm—I—never thought—you'd git it."

He looked appealingly from one to the other. A look of understanding began to dawn in the face of his daughter, and with it a look of horror.

"When I seen you was goin' to git 'em if—if you sold them hogs—I—I—oh, Gawd! I planted the cholery among 'em. I killed them hogs to keep you frum marryin' Gladys—but yuh got 'er anyhow—an' I'm glad."

Oscar's face went from red to white—and from white to gray. He stood trembling now. Gladys dropped into her arm chair and covered her face with her hands. The old man lifted his guilty eyes to look into the steely ones of his son-in-law. Then he laid the executed deed on top of the trainbook, cast one pained glance at his weeping daughter, and, dry-eyed and quaking, stumbled from the room. At the curb, he looked longingly toward the house he had given them, then, slumping into the back seat of his car, bade the driver go home.

Oscar was the first to recover from the shock. Rushing to the door, he jerked it open and ran into the street. But the new car had already turned a corner and disappeared from sight.

"That poor old devil!" he muttered. "I never thought it of 'im."

Reëntering the room, he picked Gladys up and held her close while they stood thinking. She was framing a question; he was deciding his answer.

"Are we going back to the farm, dear?" at last.

Oscar walked over to the table, picked up his punch, fingered the leaves of his trainbook, smoothed the creases from his first order—symbols of success, these were.

"Do you want to go?" he asked without looking up.

"Do you?"

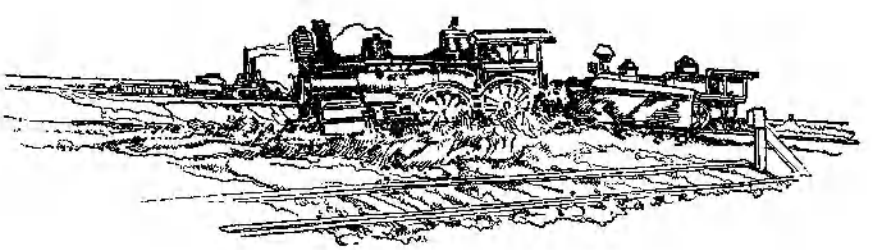
Unconsciously he picked up the deed to the Jones place, made a row of holes in it with his punch.

"Unless you're set on it—set on it—I'd rather not. It's this railroadin', I guess. Nothin' but a dog's life, but somehow it's kinda got into my blood."

His questioning eyes met her twinkling ones—twinkling with a light of mockery, and in her understanding smile he read his answer.

Every summer now, Conductor Kimpton goes down to the farm at the forks of Piney. One day the youngsters—there are three of them now—run away to a rejuvenated log house among the pines where the baby rides Grandpa Kimpton's stooping back and the others rob Grandma Kimpton's cookie jar. The next they run away to the big house where the lions with open mouths stand guarding the entrance. Here they ride thoroughbreds with Grandpa Hensley. Every summer, vacation over, they all plan how, the children educated in the city, they will return to the farm where they can live on free from the lure of the rail.

The End



THE LANGUAGE OF THE RAIL

By Bob Crabb

ONE day the switch shanty had a guest.
A young writer guy, who did his best
To grab an earful of the dope,
About the railroad game in hope
Of writing some strong telling tale;
A thrilling romance of the rail.
Notebook in hand and pencil busy,
But all too soon the poor chap's dizzy.

"We're building the local down on two,
So mudhop, start skipping through the dew.
Come on you snakes and show some steam!
Get out that zulu from the team.
Six lion cages, up on number one,
Three merchandise to make the run;
There's two bad orders on the rip,
They are ready now to take a trip."

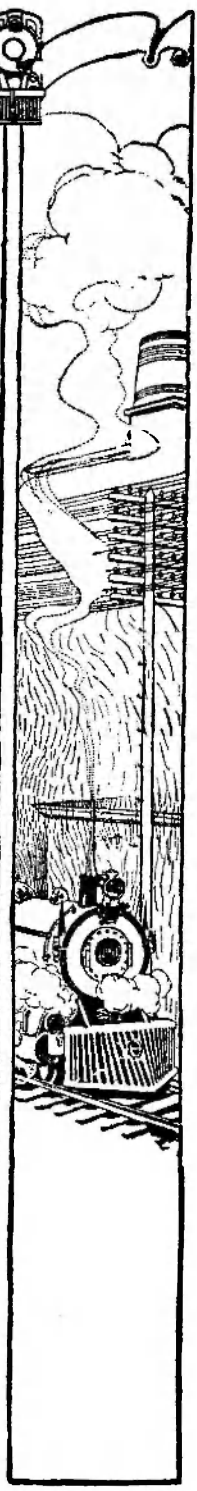
"O K, ringmaster, let's start the parade!
Get the elephant out of the shade.
Hey, tallowpot! Got that teakettle hot?
Come on hoghead get off the spot!
Into the garden take the goat,
A couple of battleships to float.
A flock of straw hats on number three,
And a car of junk for Kankakee."

"A yellow reefer at the dock.
The local's called for nine o'clock,
So toss those buggies into line
And hook the crummy on behind.
The skipper's waiting for the bills,
Highball the baby over the hills;
Just thumb your nose at the rear end shack
As the local freight rolls down the track."

The perplexed writer scratched his head
And then to the fat yardmaster said,
"Kind sir, I find all this confusing,
Won't you explain? Don't be refusing!"
The yardmaster answered with a grin,
"Sure thing, old kid! Don't pull the pin,
Just have a seat and take it slow.
What are the things you want to know?"

"Railroad talk? Our language is queer?
Why! It's all plain English pure and clear.
See those guys at work on the track?
They are gandy dancers brown and black.
Snipes with a king snipe over there,
And that's a car toad bleeding the air
On that long drag down number four.
Well? Do you want to know some more?"

Puzzled, the yardmaster shook his head,
For the writer chap had turned and fled.



"WITH MUCH ACTION AND GYRATIONS SHE TOOK MY HAND AND THEN LOOKED FAR AWAY"

Observations of a Country Station Agent

Luther Leghorn of Lone Oak in a "Head-on" with Matrimony and a Mate-hunting Widow

By J. E. Smith

FEEL I have had a very close call. I do not mean by that that I have been in any railroad collision or derailment, or that a flying auto missed me by a fraction of a second, or that my physical existence was in any way imperiled, but my state of existence was threatened.

Some nosey reader may want to know what I mean by state of existence. Dear brother, it is the individual liberty I now possess; the lack of restraint I now feel; the power of choice: the privilege of doing as I please. I came near losing all these God-given heritages.

A woman came into my life. I cannot say she was a sweet and tender violet. She was no clinging vine. She was a rangy, assertive, hard-hitting Nordic on a manhunt. She espied me, and decided I belonged to her. That means pay check, personal freedom, rights, title, and possession to have and to hold until death do us part. I know that was her idea of a partnership, and Luther Leghorn was to be party of the second part.

I am unmarried. This information may as well be given out here and now. I am what the ladies of the sewing club in our little village are pleased to term an eligible bachelor. That means one

who is fair game to be chased and chosen by any woman mate-hunter.

I have no radical opinions on matrimony, and since I am on the outside I shall not discuss it. As for womanhood, I have neither censure nor panegyrics. I have noticed that some men get married and survive. I muddle along in single blessedness, and to this present moment I, likewise, am existent.

My somewhat narrow vision and stunted observations are that when a good woman marries, her man imposes on her. When a bad woman marries, she imposes on the man. Looking at so simple a proposition, it would appear that the thing for a man to do is to seek only the good and scorn the bad woman. Brother, there is where the complications begin. There is no way of knowing what is concealed under the superficial outwardness until one marries in blind and happy confidence, and it is then too late to rectify any mistakes.

She may be a fair creature to look upon. She may be soft-spoken. She may cling to you and cry for you. You may swear she has the graces of an angel. You grab her off, and she is yours for eternity. She may peel the potatoes and flap the flapjacks, or she may be a heaven-sent agitator or reformer, or she may whoop or whist. Her whirl of life has many tangents. She may be a wife sent from heaven, or she may be a ranting termagant.

Now that all is clear and we know where we are, let us get at the train of events that led to these random observations, and, as I thought, threatened my freedom.

For a long time I have had room and board with Mose Hokum, our section foreman. I have fared very well. His home is close to the station, and that makes it nice for both of us. He has a dutiful wife and a good cook. I have found that all my wants are cared for, so in a measure I am content and have not felt the urge from necessity of a life partner. The complications I am about to relate were brought about by Mose in this way.

After an uneventful day for both of us, and we had eaten supper, with its base of fried country sausage and biscuits, Mose proposed that we take the car and run over to Seymour and spend the evening doing the street carnival, then going at its wildest. I was agreed, and we went.

A carnival is a combination of clamorous noises and bright lights. In Chautauqua circles it is abhorred as coarse and debasing. The hoi-polloi are strong for it. Then the local traders think it brings people into the town. So there you are. We have started an argument all for nothing.

At any rate, in the twilight of a summer evening, Mose Hokum and Luther Leghorn of Lone Oak drove over to Seymour to hear the ballyhoo and to see the freaks and monstrosities and get a full share of all the hokum and whoopee.

We loitered down the white way. We passed the rings and canes, the baby dolls, the blanket and pillow bargains, the thousand-tentacled octopus of the deep sea, and the double-headed calf. Mose spoke up:

"What have we here?"

We were at the tent of Abulala, the dark-eyed, swarthy mystic. In flaming letters it was announced that she was a daughter of the Orient—a sibylla of the occult East—the seventh daughter of the seventh. She knew astrology, palmistry, and all other forms of divination. She had the robes and the concealments.

"Tell'e furtune, M e e s t'r; fifty cent'm; all about the future, Meest'r."

Now that looked to me like a fair proposition. When one can get "all about the future, Meest'r, for fifty cent'm," it is well enough to make the investment. There are those among us profound in prudence and sagacity, who poo-hoo the idea of such magic necromancy and witchcraft claiming to penetrate the future.

I have a simpler mind. With radios and X-rays in actual demonstration, I am ready to believe anything. To this I had the fifty cents, and to that I had a keen curiosity about the future. My own individual forecast, made in the dead of the night to the mournful caterwauling of a black cat, did not offer much promise. She conducted me into the tent. Sap or sucker, I wanted the actual low-down on what was in store for me.

I sat down. She took my hand and looked me steadily in the eye. Then she looked far away while contortions seized her. She murmured incoherent incantations. By and by she came out of it and told me in fair Hoboken that a tall, slender woman was going to cross my path. At first I would seek to evade her and escape from her, but she would persist and pursue. In the end there was a mist—she could not penetrate—but everything ends happily. She could see that clearly. Then she saw money from an unexpected source. I had an enemy. He was plotting my injury. But the day would come when I would bar-arm, wrist-lock, and half-nelson him. Taking it all through, it was a very satisfactory forecast. When there remains a fighting chance on the woman proposition, the prospects of samoleons, and the assurance of subduing your enemy, you are getting a big fifty cents' worth.

"What did she tell you?" asked Mose, when I joined him outside.

"Of course it is all bunk," I answered Mose, stressing by accent my incredulity. "She says a woman is to cross my path, I am to come in possession of money, and I am to subdue my enemy."

"V e r y g o o d," observed Mose. "Very good. She did not short-weight you, nor hold out on you. You got full measure of real blahblah, woman, money, enemy. So, a woman is to cross your path. She could not help making a sure shot on that one. Then you are to have money. That will interest my wife, as it has certain relations to the board bill. The enemy you are to triumph over, who is he?"

"Well," I replied, "it is not quite clear. There is a mist. Those were her words. But the one that stands out above any fog or mist in my mind is Superintendent Hicks. He does not think much of me, since the day he caught me with whiskers and barefooted. He threatened to fire me. While I cleaned up, I figure that I am now going along on a sort of probation. So I am setting him down as the enemy she warned me of. Say, man, if I can get the best of him, my fifty cents are well spent."

II

Mose repeated a number of times the three-point forecast, to be sure that he had it right. When he got home he told his wife that Luther had had his fortune told by a Hindoo witch, and that a woman would cross Luther's path. Luther was to come into money. Luther would get the best of his enemy.

The good wife was so much impressed with the estimate of Luther's future that she yawned and ordered all hands to bed, as the hour was late.

It was eleven o'clock. That is deep, dark into the night in Lone Oak. Let the wicked world riot on. In the dim hours we snooze and snore. At six we are refreshed and the buckwheat cakes come on.

The next day after, doing its station work, the local freight took the siding to let No. 66 pass.

Conductor Joe Baker came into the office and flopped into my best chair. Fireman Clair got up on the telegraph table, which is always a good roosting place. There were some words interchanged over small things relating to the jobs, when Baker, seized by a new thought, spoke up and asked me:

"Luther, how come that you never got married?"

I returned with that old wheeze about not being able to find any one that would have me.

"I cannot understand why you are not married," Baker went on. "The way I look at it, it is every man's duty who can, to have and support a family. When you fail to do this you are a slacker to your country."

"What do you mean by family?" I asked. "What has that got to do with whist and cigarettes?"

Baker ignored that come-back.

"The railroad prefers married men. They make the best workers. They are steadier and more dependable."

"You mean they got to stick," I argued, "so they will be there to meet the next monthly payments."

Baker muffed that one.

"A man does not amount to anything until he is married and has a family," Baker went on. "He is not a real man until he is the head of a household and stands straight up."

"I have seen heads of households, thousands of them," I retorted. "They do not look like exclamation points to me. They always seem humped over, looking down. They are interrogation points. You see, in this punctuation scheme I am a dead stop. I never saw any woman who interested me."

"That is very strange," returned Baker. "Men are different. Now and then we find a pariah. Take Clair there, every skirt he sees interests him. You may think you are immune, Luther, but one of these days a woman will cross your path, and you will never be the same afterward."

"Only a matter of time," echoed Clair. "A woman will cross your path."

Note those ominous words, spoken by both the trainmen:

"A woman will cross your path."

That is what the soothsayer said. "A woman will cross your path." I am hearing that too often. It makes me creepy. Just a short time ago I was reading about a foreigner by the name of Julius Cæsar who passed along State Street, Chicago. At every square some one would sotto voce him with "beware the ides of March." It made him jumpy to hear it so often, but he hung around to see, and he got his Et tu Brute, which is Roman for the way they carry on in Chicago.

I have certain misgivings that if every one I meet keeps repeating that sentence something may develop from it.

When I went to my boarding house Mrs. Hokum, my landlady, saluted me with the query:

"Well, Luther, did any woman cross your path to-day?"

I assured her that no woman had crossed my path that day, nor was one likely to to-morrow, the next day, nor any subsequent day.

"Do not be too sure of that," interposed Mose, her husband. "I have no

doubt in my mind that something like that is going to happen. The fortune-teller said so. Black as she is, I consider that one a dead shot."

After supper Mose occupied himself with a paper and with rather eager scrutiny.

ed a wife. Why, you can read full descriptions right here and pick out the one that suits you. The agency introduces the prospects and charges a small fee, see? You make your own choice. It is great sport."

I was rather dense.

"SOME WOMAN WILL CROSS YOUR PATH," SHE SAID

"What seems to be so interesting?" I asked.

"This is a matrimonial paper," Mose replied.

"What kind of a paper is that?"

"It is gotten out by a matrimonial agency," Mose explained. "If a man wants a woman, or, t'other way round, if a woman wants a man, the agency matches 'em up. This paper describes the prospects. Now, say that you want-

"What are you doing with a paper like that?" I asked. "You have one good wife. Why all this curiosity and excitement?"

"When I got this paper to look over, I had in mind Otto Gross," Mose explained further. "Otto has been a section hand under me for eleven years. He is as good a hand as any section foreman has ever had. He is the most timid and bashful man I ever knew. He

has never been known to look at a woman. He finds it difficult to figure and write. Now, here is the prospect. The old foreman at Holton retires before long on a pension. Supervisor Slagle would like to make Otto the new section foreman, but thinks that, while he might know track work, he is a little short on education. See? Now, if I can get Otto married to a good woman who can write letters and figure some, he will be right in line. See?"

"That is rather a happy idea," I observed. "When a man needs additional educational equipment in his business and a woman can supply it, why matrimony is the answer."

"I am writin' 'em," Mose went on. "But all this is under your hat, understand. Now, if any strange woman writes in or comes around here in person, prowling around, you understand, help everything along. It is all for Otto's good. See?"

"If she looks good enough, I will do everything I can for the good of the cause," I assured Mose.

"That's the idea," returned Mose. "Let's look over the wants and do some picking. Here is one I like pretty well."

Mose passed the paper to me, and indicated by his finger the particular letter he had in mind.

"Read that one over."

I took the paper and read aloud, that the two wise judges might give it the proper estimate.

"'I am a widow of thirty. I have no children. I am very lonely. I need the love and companionship of a good, strong man. I have a sunny disposition. I love beauty in everything, and want the higher and finer things in life. I am very companionable. I do my own sewing, and I am a good cook. I want to hear from some gentleman of serious intentions.'"

"How's that?" observed Mose. "She can make her own clothes, and she knows how to cook." To Mose that one sentence embraced all female requirements. "Higher and finer" did not mean anything, but "cook and sew" filled all the specifications. "I think I will answer that one."

"You answer it?"

"Why, yes, for Otto, understand. I want to fix that young fellow out."

Mose did answer it. He worked at it long and laboriously. I heard him tell his wife he had to figure up his tie requisition for next year. That is one of the blessed things about the married state. You got to explain everything or shortcut by lying. I went to bed. I did not rest as well as I usually do. I dreamed "a woman crossed my path." It must have been the pickles or the hash we had for supper.

I asked Mose, a few days later, how this thing was to work out. Would the woman write to Otto, or would she come on to visit him? There has to be some way to close the deal.

"I do not know exactly," replied Mose. "It will not surprise me any if she comes on here direct. If she does, that is where you come in. She will come to you first. All you got to do is to hold her and lead on the developments."

That looked simple and easy to Mose. Somehow, I did not have any particular enthusiasm for my part of the enterprise. I, Luther Leghorn, station agent at Lone Oak for the X. Y. Z. RR., did not care to become the special representative of any matrimonial agency. I had hard work handling one agency. Two were one too many. Who wants to get mixed up with all this mate-hunting, lovelorn lunacy anyway? Not I. But I had allowed myself to become involved in Mose's wild

nuptial designs, and as it was all for the good of Otto Gross, I could not renege. I was rather obligated to go along with the plan. I assured myself that if it should be the means of making a section foreman out of Otto, it was worth my best efforts.

III

A WEEK or ten days went by. Mose's interest intensified as the days went by.

Every day he asked me if I had seen or heard from the lonely but lovable lady.

Every day his wife asked me in merry jest if any woman had yet crossed my path.

So it was on the seventh or tenth day thereafter I was in my office working on my tariff files, putting in new issues, taking out old ones, when a visitor came tiptoeing inside and gave a tentative "hem" to announce her presence.

She came around the counter into the office. She did not wait for me to ask her what I could do for her. She said rather briskly:

"I want to see Mr. Luther Leghorn."

I replied that I am he. I said it that way, too. There are railroaders who would have said "I am him." Not me. I know "he" from "him."

She looked me over in cool appraisal. I suspicioned she was not getting much out of the picture. I have never had the social classification of a Greek god. In fact, when it comes down to mechanical inspection as we know it on the railroad, I would be tagged for light repairs, probably the back shop. I do not present any striking appearance. In general live stock grading, I would be a fair to medium, probably a cull.

"*So*—you are Mr. Luther Leghorn?"

I did not know why she should see fit to stress the "so." I replied:

"Yes, ma'm, I am Mr. Luther Leghorn."

"Well."

That was all for that breath. Then with a computing eye she measured me, number eight foot to seven head. I did not quite understand why this deliberate once-over. I resumed attention to my tariff sheets, and awaited further words from my fair visitor.

I use the word fair from the sense of innate gallantry a hardened bachelor affects toward womankind of all types.

Decidedly this intruder was not fair. In architectural lines she was angular and rangy. Her features were rather sharp. Her eye was keen with that X-ray quality of penetrating into and boring through. She had an air of restlessness and energy that no real lover of ease cares to encounter. She was attired neatly enough and had taken some pains in habiliment for a favorable impression. She was not overpainted nor rouged. Her hair had never been bobbed. It was turned and twisted with some degree of skill into two knots which nestled cunningly enough behind each ear. The ears stood out well. They are the ears that never miss a sound. They are worthy aids and confederates to her keen eyes. She was equipped to see every shadow and hear every whisper.

I made a few squints from the tail of my eye and gathered all this while ostensibly continuing my tariff filing. In another moment she again echoed:

"Well."

What was this, I thought? Was it another Poe's raven scene with a change of words? If "never more" was needed I had it at the end of my tongue.

"I am a bit disappointed," she added at last.

"Quite possible," I observed, without any particular interest or expression, and without looking up from the work before me. "Every one finds some of that during a lifetime."

"I have been given a description of you," she continued. "I have been informed that you are not married. That you are thirty years of age. Of a most agreeable and sunny disposition. That you make a fair salary at regular employment, and that you are a handsome man—a handsome man."

"SO YOU ARE MR. LUTHER LEGHORN"

She repeated that last specification and with emphasis on the word handsome, which indicated that there might be a lurking suspicion of doubt. It impelled me to speak up with a degree of spirit.

"Madam, I do not know the purpose of this inventory. If it is insurance, I do not want any. But I am a bachelor. I am near thirty. I am not agreeable and sunny. I never was, never will be. I manage to get along on my salary. I am not handsome. I never can be. I take after all my folks on both sides. They were, all of them, the homeliest people in Bartholomew County. They were all noted for their deformities, blemishes, and all around ugliness."

I thought that was a plain enough presentation of facts, and that it would set the lady right, and that she could then proceed with a clear and honest understanding.

"My name is Rosie Beam, of Larrup, Illi-noise. I am a widow with no children, but struggling along in the world. I want a husband. I am telling it bluntly. A friend of yours, a very good friend of yours, has told me of you, all about you. So I have sum-

moned the nerve to come to you in a modern, businesslike way to say to you, that I want you for my husband. Why should not a woman have the privilege of choosing the same as a man, I ask you?"

I did not stop work at once. I did not even simper, "This is so sudden." I completed the details of the work I was doing. Finally I turned to the woman and smiled. She smiled in return and which seemed to set her at absolute ease.

"Do you think I have *it?*" she questioned.

"What is *it?*" I asked.

"That enticing, come-on look. It is the soul light."

"Solite," I blundered along. "That is a brand of gasoline, isn't it?"

"S-o-u-l l-i-g-h-t." She spelled it out.

"Oh!" responded I, being careful not to strike a match.

"It is the state where the emotions of the mind record and register in the features."

I was pleased to have this information.

"I am curious to know why you have picked me out as your life's partner. What is the matter with Larrup, Illi-noise, that you should come all the way over to Indiana, and why Luther Leghorn?"

"My fate was revealed to me," she replied. "It was in the stars. It must and has to come about. That is all. I cannot divulge anything further at this time."

"Hully gee! She had been to a street fair too." That was a smothered conjecture.

"This is nice of you. It shows excellent taste and judgment, but, really, I have no intention of getting married."

"On our first interview," she returned, "I did not expect any other answer. My campaign is all planned. I have picked you for my husband. I am going to make you a certain number of visits. We will talk everything over, and you may come to see it as I do. I ask one thing of you, Luther Leghorn. Do not speak one word of this to any one. Remember this. I can make you ridiculous, and I can make you trouble. I'll be square with you. You be square with me. I want you for my husband, understand. I will make you a good wife. Nothing more need be said at this time. I will call again to-morrow."

She walked out with head up and with a sure stride. She got into her own car and drove away. I do not know where she went.

Once alone I did some heavy thinking.

This was the work of Mose Hokum, section foreman, plus the matrimonial agency. To these must be added my own connivance to matrimonially embroil the poor, hard-working section hand, Otto Gross. Mose had never had Otto in mind at all. He had me help along with it, pointing it all for Luther Leghorn. I was sport enough to take the turn in a good way since I had been a party to it. I was also sport enough to say nothing to any one, and let the woman's planned campaign wear itself out. All of this I decided then and there.

At first I was amazed and dumfounded that any woman should carry out her matrimonial designs so openly and brazenly. I had always thought of affection as something that grew, and that love was a prelude to the selection of life mates. I had always pictured a blushing maiden and a lovelorn youth. I thought Elysium was reached through

the confusion and tint of shyness. My conceptions are crude and are of another day. Relationships are changing.

I put on my old hat and went over to dinner. Mose's wife had a beef stew with potatoes and turnips. I had three helpings. No female proselyte from anywhere in Illi-noise is going to be permitted to impair my appetite.

The woman came again the following day, and the next. She came in her own car. She came from—I do not know where. She drove away to—I do not know where.

There was nothing silly or simpering about her. She had good knowledge in the fundamentals. She did not assume or pretend. She had no particular talents and but little polish. She was common enough in every way. She was man-hunting, and once stalking her game, she blazed away without any conventional reserves. She wanted a man who worked. She wanted him to go out and bring in the provisions while she made a home for him. That was the sort of innocent, primitive creature she was.

Nothing was simpler in her scheme of life. Nothing could be more proper and suitable. Oh, well, I mused, this is the plan that has built our civilization. Only by this plan can mankind live and grow. The man roving and predatory, the woman with maternal instincts caring for a baby and keeping the home fires burning. Confronted by this elementary truth, I felt myself slipping. So I said to Luther Leghorn: Do not scorn and despite the woman. Challenge her and dare her, if need be, but be the captain of your own soul.

Inspired by this lofty resolve, I mopped the floors and washed the windows. I do my best work under mental stress.

She came again at the usual time and noted that I had been cleaning the place. She complimented me on the improved appearance it presented. Numerically, I do not know what visit this was, but I rather inferred that she was not pleased with the progress of her campaign nor with the actions of her prospect.

While she was there Mose Hokum and his section gang had come to the team track siding to load some old rail onto a flat car placed for that purpose.

While the woman and I were talking we became aware of an outside commotion, and saw that Mose was making his way to the depot supporting Otto Gross, the section hand.

There had been an accident. Otto's hand was lacerated. It was covered with blood. I tried to faint, but outside of a cold sweat, I did not make a go of it.

"Where's your first-aid kit?" asked Mose.

I produced it. I went about to do something I do not know what. I did not have the steady nerve of a Red Cross aid. I had quaking knees and trembling hands.

But the woman—fellow workers, I say it again, the woman—with cool head and firm fingers, dressed the hand with clean water and mercurochrome and bound it up with gauze.

"Come on," she said. "Help him into my car. I am taking him to Seymour, to the hospital. His hand must be X-rayed. There may be broken bones. This must be looked after right away."

Otto got into the auto largely under his own steam. She drove him away. She did not ask for any one to go along. Mose, the other hands, and myself looked after her with the inefficiency of dubs.

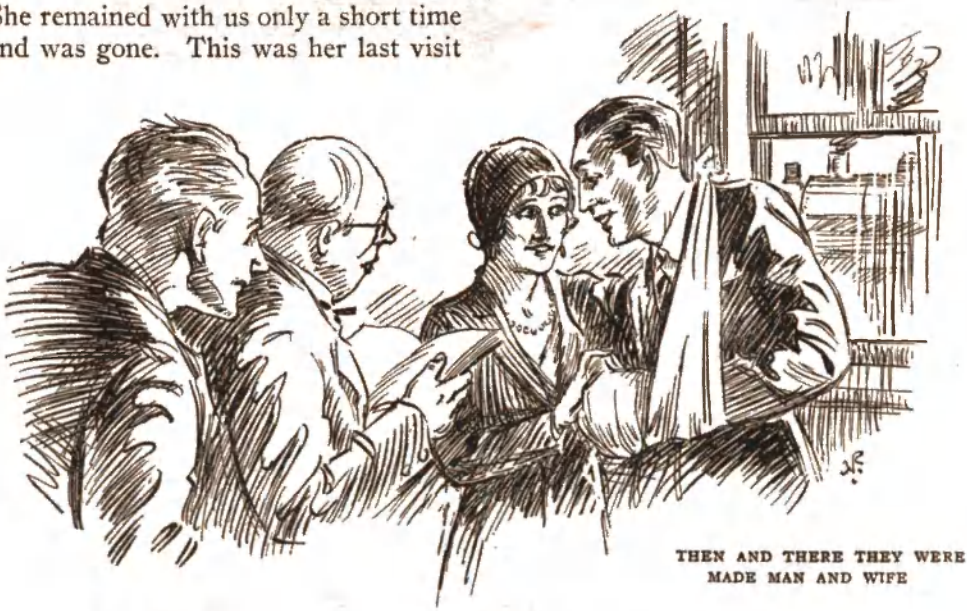
"Who is that woman?" asked Mose.

"Rosie Beam, of Larrup, Illinoise."

"Friend of yourn?"

"Just a chance acquaintance," I replied.

The woman returned next day and brought the hospital report. No bones were broken. Only a flesh wound. Otto would be off some two weeks or longer. She remained with us only a short time and was gone. This was her last visit to my office on her mission of conquest. A woman had crossed my path.



THEN AND THERE THEY WERE MADE MAN AND WIFE

IV

From day to day we had word from Otto. He made rapid recovery.

Some two weeks later Road Supervisor Slagle came to Mose with this—

A woman had come to visit him at his office on behalf of Otto Gross. He, Slagle, had promised the woman that Otto was to be the new foreman at Holton when he returned to duty. He wanted Otto there anyway, but he always thought Otto was a little too timid and afraid of responsibility. The woman has been looking after him since he was hurt. She says he is not timid, only conscientious, and that he wants the job. So everything is set. "Who is this woman, anyway? A nurse or relative?"

"I do not know," answered Mose. "She has been visiting Luther."

I could not supply much information outside of addresses, so I divulged nothing else.

Then came a most unusual happening at any station agent's office. An auto drove up at high noon and three people got out and came into the office. They were a minister, Otto Gross, and the woman.

Every one was happy but Luther Leghorn, who was stupefied into such submission as was necessary for the deep designs of the mysterious plotters.

"So here we have the place, the time, and the girl," facetiously observed the minister.

"I am sure," said the woman stoutly, "that Mr. Leghorn will have no objections. We are getting married, Mr. Leghorn," she continued, addressing me directly. "Otto is to be my hus-

band. Neither of us have a home here, and no interested relatives. Otto does not want to go to any one's home. He is a bit bashful. So we came here where we knew we would be welcome."

So then and there they were made man and wife. Otto Gross of Lone Oak and Rosie Beam of Larrup, Illinoise.

I shook Otto's good hand in congratulation. I looked the bride squarely in the eyes and said:

"I shall now kiss the bride," and which I did resoundingly.

She was happy. She had her man. She spoke with animation:

"Otto is to be the foreman of the Holton section. Think of that! He has charge of the tracks, the line and the surface. The great trains carrying all the great people of the world will ride over Otto's section. Otto will always be on guard to see that everything is all right. Isn't that a wonderful job? I will write his letters and do his figuring. Otto's work is so important, and it is all so marvelous."

Otto grinned indulgently, but with self-satisfied complaisance.

It was all amazing to her, and what an admirable view to take of a job!

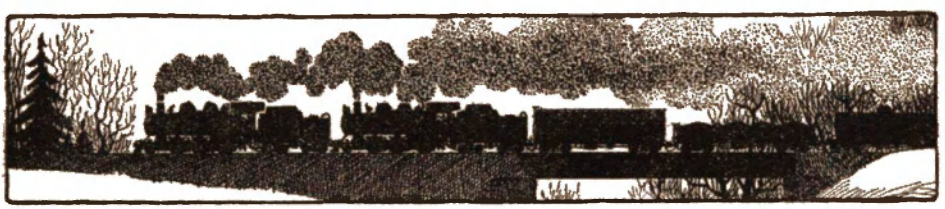
They drove away.

I mused to myself about Otto:

"The lucky dog! She will be the making of him."

I tried to whistle a few bars, but the spirit of Beethoven was not in it, so it perished with the first breath.

Then Luther Leghorn, a low, lone animal hungering for meat, made his way to his eating-place, where there was roast pork.

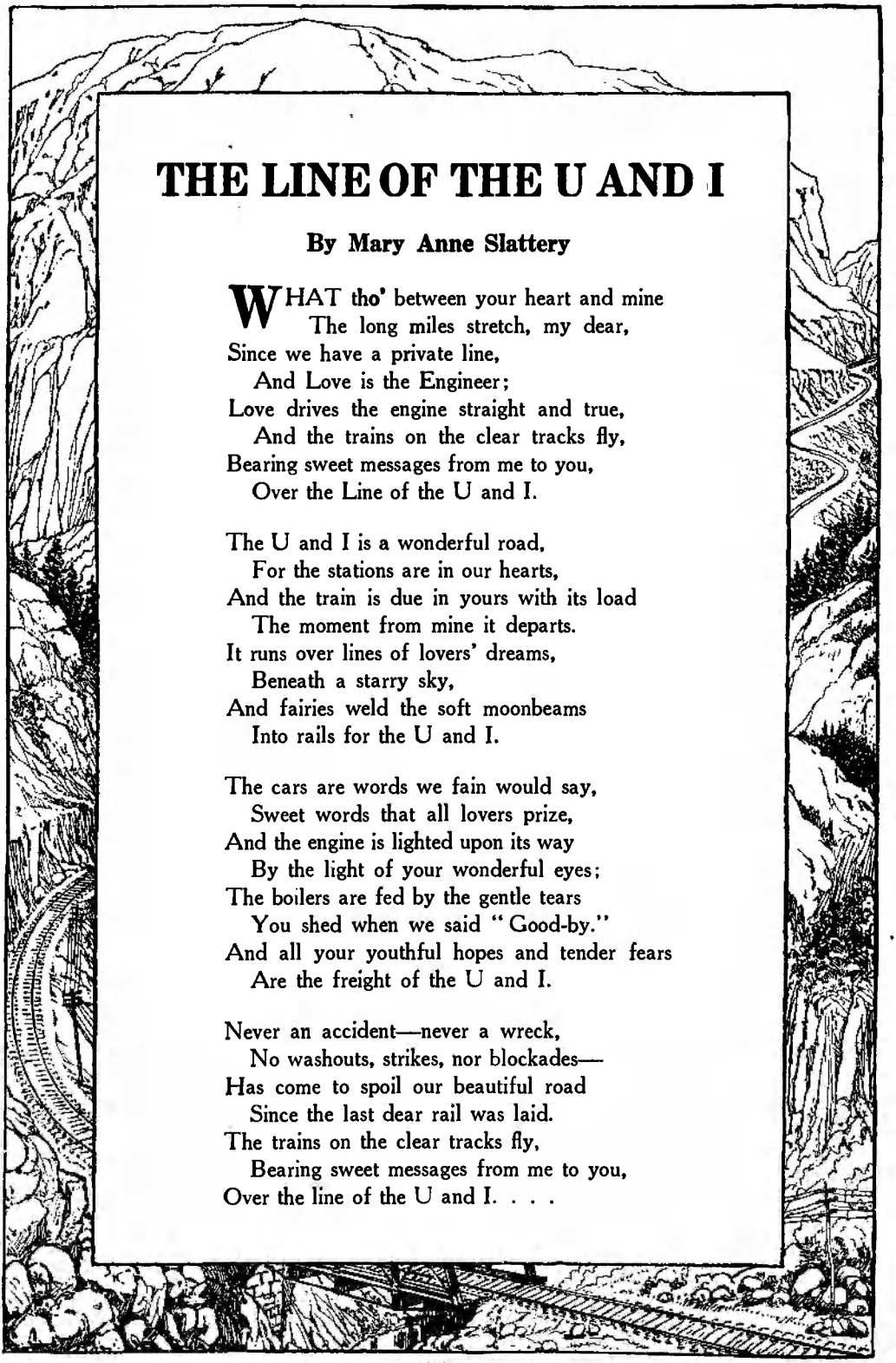


PENNSYLVANIA IS ELECTRIFYING 1,300 MILES OF TRACKAGE

THE Pennsylvania Railroad Company is electrifying its tracks between New York City and Wilmington, Del., a job involving a total trackage of 1,300 miles, of which 325 miles are devoted to passenger service. It is estimated that the cost will be $100,000,000 and that from seven to eight years will be required for its completion. It is planned eventually to electrify, section by section, the whole trackage of the Pennsylvania system, a matter of 11,000 miles.

To a large extent, the decision to substitute electric drive for steam was influenced by the desire of the management to increase its high-speed freight service so as to be better able to handle expeditiously a much larger volume of perishable foodstuffs and to transport other essential commodities with a minimum of delay in transit. The Pennsylvania Railroad is looking well ahead to the time when the Metropolitan area will have a population of 30,000,000, such as may be expected by 1950.

A statement from the executive offices of the company explains: "We expect, eventually, to reduce the number of freight trains 50 per cent for a given car movement, and to increase the speed to any reasonable extent required. This, of itself, will provide for a 100 per cent increase in capacity in so far as freight movement is concerned. In the case of passenger trains, we expect to eliminate all double-heading and most, if not all, of the second sections of trains, and to avoid the possibility of rough handling due to limited starting capacity—all of which make for greater comfort, better service and increased capacity of the line."



THE LINE OF THE U AND I

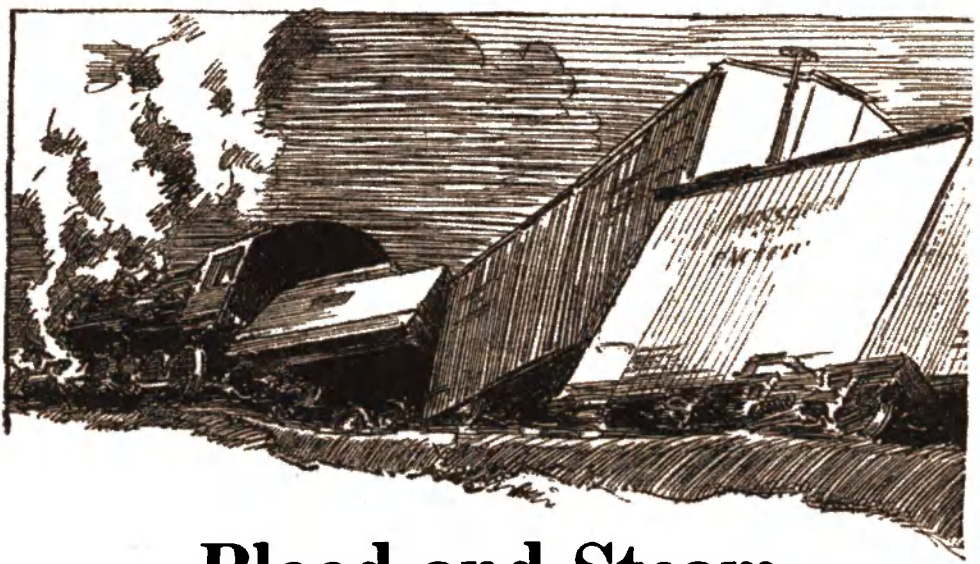
By Mary Anne Slattery

WHAT tho' between your heart and mine
The long miles stretch, my dear,
Since we have a private line,
And Love is the Engineer;
Love drives the engine straight and true,
And the trains on the clear tracks fly,
Bearing sweet messages from me to you,
Over the Line of the U and I.

The U and I is a wonderful road,
For the stations are in our hearts,
And the train is due in yours with its load
The moment from mine it departs.
It runs over lines of lovers' dreams,
Beneath a starry sky,
And fairies weld the soft moonbeams
Into rails for the U and I.

The cars are words we fain would say,
Sweet words that all lovers prize,
And the engine is lighted upon its way
By the light of your wonderful eyes;
The boilers are fed by the gentle tears
You shed when we said "Good-by."
And all your youthful hopes and tender fears
Are the freight of the U and I.

Never an accident—never a wreck,
No washouts, strikes, nor blockades—
Has come to spoil our beautiful road
Since the last dear rail was laid.
The trains on the clear tracks fly,
Bearing sweet messages from me to you,
Over the line of the U and I. . . .



Blood and Steam

Bullets Sing Through an Engine Cab to Warn Joe Allen of the Feudal Reckoning

By Don Waters

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

JOE ALLEN, main line fireman and a product of the Blue Ridge mountain country, is on a yard job with Crab McAllister, a hogger, when the two turn in an engine with a dirty fire and leaky throttle and go to seek the roundhouse foreman. The throttle leak allows enough steam to get into the cylinders to move the engine, on which the air pumps had been stopped and the brakes had leaked off. Joe sees the engine backing down through the yard, and after a mad dash catches it and prevents it from side-swiping the Blue Streak, crack passenger run of the road.

Joe and Crab are given a choice between thirty days off without pay or thirty days on the Slabtown local by the superintendent after Upson, the super's chief clerk, chimes in on the hearing. Jack Eagle, engineer of the Blue Streak, thanks Joe for his bravery in preventing the crash, and Joe has an opportunity to meet Jack's daughter June, much to Upson's disgust.

Joe then takes two days at home in the hills before reporting for the Slabtown, and here he finds Sneed Cowsie, a mountain youth, stirring up an old family feud. Joe's

Continued at bottom of following page

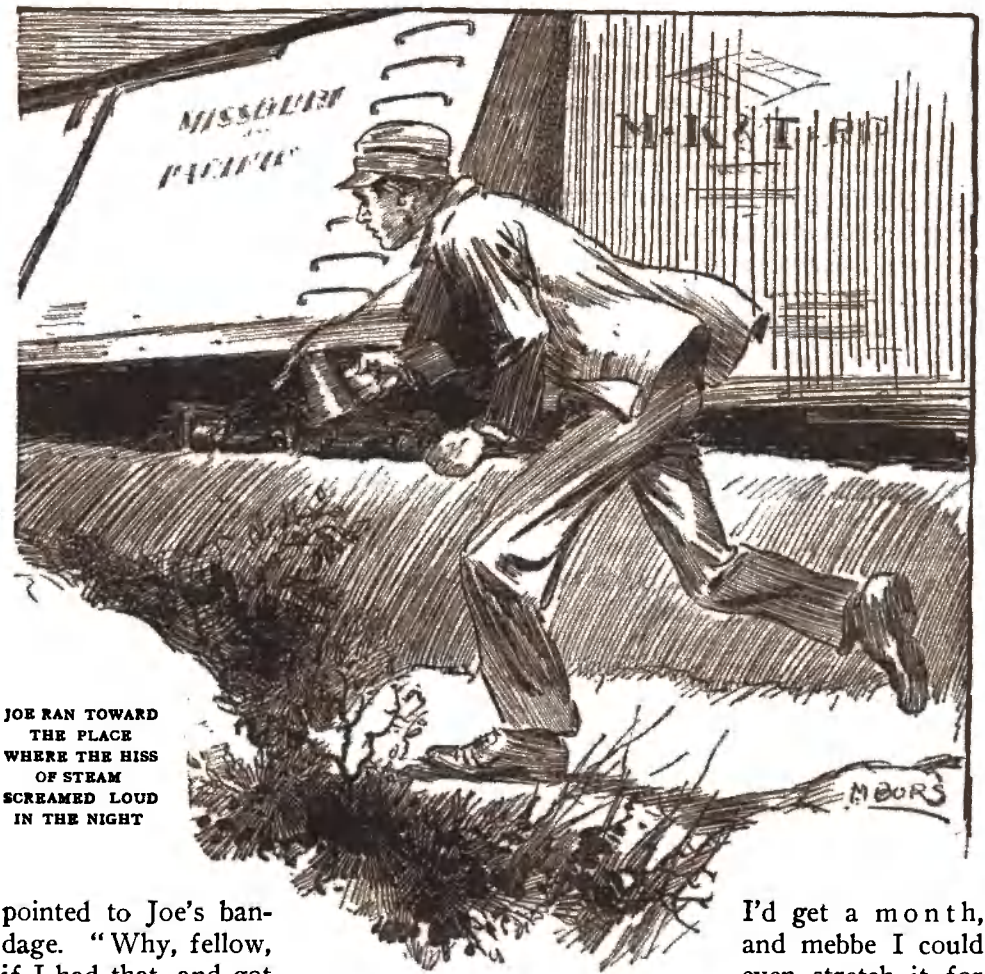
XIV

WHEN he left June Eagle, Joe hurried down to the shops and over to the wash room, changed his clothes, and got to his train down in the yards a few minutes before it pulled out. As he climbed into the cab, Crab McAllister gazed wonderingly at him.

"What? You goin' out, Nervy?" the engineer asked in amazement.

"Sure," Joe replied.

"Well, of all the blankety blank, double back action, triple-plated, simple-minded idiots, you win the silver-mounted mahogany brake stick!" He



JOE RAN TOWARD THE PLACE WHERE THE HISS OF STEAM SCREAMED LOUD IN THE NIGHT

pointed to Joe's bandage. "Why, fellow, if I had that, and got it like you did, I'd be sitting up there at the hospital, chinning with some pretty nurse like a rabbit chewing cabbage, and every time the doctor showed up I'd groan loud, long, and mournful. I'd get a month, and mebbe I could even stretch it for six weeks' vacation with full pay."

Crab shook his head reproachfully.

"You got absolutely no sense, Joe, absolutely none," he continued. "That crack on the dome must have knocked

father tries to prevail on Joe to quit railroading, but Joe returns to work, only to find that a series of robberies has been started, and evidence points to Cowsie. Belnap, special agent, cautions Joe to keep his eyes open and report anything suspicious on the round. Joe meets Mary Lee Cowsie in Slabtown.

Joe then runs into a car theft in the yards while waiting for his train to be made up and, contrary to Belnap's orders, Joe lights into the thugs. He is beaten and loaded into a car, and only escapes far down the road, where he breaks into a telegraph office and notifies the dispatcher of the robbery. Joe then is invited to June Eagle's house for dinner, and afterward is met by a boy from his home, who tells him that his father has been shot and that Sneed Cowsie is responsible. The feud blood rises in Joe's heart and he goes to avenge his father's injury. He learns that the Cowsie family is trying to force old man Allen into selling his property. Joe, however, thinks of June as he goes after Cowsie with a gun and holds off on shooting. Returning to the terminal Joe sees June Eagle riding with Upson, which gives him a start. Jack Eagle prevails on Joe to sign up regularly for the Slabtown local.

out what little you had. The only sign of human intelligence I've seen you show recently was when you took up with Jack Eagle's daughter. I suppose she finds it's amusing to have you around just to see how you act." Crab grinned broadly. "I seen you perambulating around the circus grounds with her this afternoon, with your head thrown back, and you stepping on your toes. Only for the fact your dome was all wrapped up, and I was afraid I'd get it out of shape, I'd 'a' given you a good one on top of it, and brought you down to earth again."

Joe grinned good-naturedly.

"Why, of course I came back to work as soon as I could. What fun is there in loafering around? I never could get any kick out of that."

"I'm afraid you're goin' to grow up and turn out bad," Crab persisted. "I'm afraid you'll develop into a hog-head with nothing before you but running one of these perambulating, wheezing liver shakers that the company gives us to haul their freight. You've got the makings of something in you, but you're wasting your young life." He looked back. "Well, there's Green Flag waving us on. I see his chin working. I guess he's reading off a brief biography with me as the glowing subject. Let's roll on!"

He opened up the throttle, and the 81 slowly swung her drivers. As they got under way, the engineer pulled out the train order flimsy and handed it across to Joe.

"We got a wait order at Fifteen Mile passing track with No. 93, the red-baller," he said. "I don't guess he'll hold us up long. I mebbe can get out to Slabtown in time to make my big sneak again to-night."

The 81 drove out on the main line, took the switch to the Glen Cove division, and forty minutes later they went into the siding at Fifteen Mile. The conductor and brakeman came up toward the engine. Crab grinned as he looked back and saw them approaching.

"I got down to Yellow Hill yesterday evening," he told Joe, "and caught the only flivver in town just in time to see that bunch fanning in for the general store. I beat 'em to it by five minutes. All they see of me was my dust bending around the curve. Listen to me, Nervy—I'm goin' to give those bozoes a swell rag-out!"

Crab winked broadly, and a complacent expression then settled on his face.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed sardonically, when the conductor climbed into the engine. "I put it all over you birds. You sure missed it! That was a swell show at the Majestic last night. You ought to see the beef trust hoofing it—specially the third one from the right-hand end. The Elks were having their convention. We had a real party after the show, and I never turned in till three o'clock this morning." He yawned and stretched himself deliciously. "I hope you guys rested well, with nothing to disturb your sweet dreams after your nice walk in the moonlight."

"Aw, rats!" Green Flag West retorted. "You give me an extreme pain. Every time I see any bozo that looks like you, I feel like I just took a dose o' salts. You affect me like a boil on the back o' my neck. Some day a flea'll back up against your head and kick your brains out!"

Crab grinned.

"Warble on, Green Flag, warble on!" He yawned again. "Your ballad sounds like sweet music to my ears. I got a deep sympathy for you, brother

in distress. Last night, about twelve thirty, I remarks to a delegate from Cincinnati, as we blew the foam off'n the seventh or mebbe eighth high one, I remarks:

"'Now Green Flag, he's my conductor, and he'd sure like to be sitting around, watching the boys to-night. It would do him a lot o' good to see how real gents act.'"

"Waffo, waffo!" Green Flag ejaculated. "That's the stuff that makes the grass grow green. I got enough of that Mexican athalete line of yours." He pointed back to the short train. "When 93 goes by, I'll let you take 'em away. You can't go wrong. There's a couple o' steel rails leading clear out to Slabtown, and you can't get off'n them. They'll keep you out o' the pastures on the way there. We'll line up the switches; and mebbe, if you lay back your ears and don't bray too loud, to-night we'll all chip in and buy you a bale o' hay for your dinner to-morrow!"

Green Flag pointed ahead. Darkness was falling. The glare from an approaching headlight lit up the sky.

"Here comes 93," he said. "I got to get back. Besides, that song of yours sounds flat on my ears. You ought to sing us the second verse once in a while."

The conductor left.

"I sure been having the time of my young life handing that yegg two for one!" Crab said gleefully.

Joe laughed.

"Tell me something for certain, Crab. I'll not let you down. All that stuff about the Elks and the show, was it straight?"

The engineer shook his head.

"Naw, I was just putting a horse on him. I had a hell of a time getting home last night. I walked to Yellow Hill, caught a flivver, and got down to the cut-off in time to see 87's markers glimmering down the track. I waited over two hours for a drag. I never crawled in between the sheets till after midnight, and I had to crawl out at five this morning. Gee, Nervy, but this is a fierce job! Every time I look at you it puzzles me to think you could have dodged all this easy, and you didn't do it. I got a notion to take my rap, and tell the colonel to shove this run—" He stopped. "Aw, hell! Mebbe something exciting'll turn up," he added philosophically, shrugging his shoulders.

The headlight of 93's engine, approaching them, threw its dazzling shaft of light into the cab of the 81. Joe looked ahead to where, half a mile away, the freight swept around a curve. As he looked, the light seemed suddenly to jump upward. A second or two later came the crash and rip of steel striking steel. The headlight swayed, sagged suddenly, hung poised for an instant, and then seemed to flop down into the ground. Darkness shut in—a darkness filled with the clang and roar of heavy bodies striking hard, the abrupt banging of steel cars, the dead crunch of splintering wood.

"Great balls of fire!" Crab yelled. "Ninety-three's hopped the steel! She's turned over and wrecked herself!"

He jumped down from his seat box, grabbed his torch, dodged through the gangway, and leaped to the ground. Joe followed him, and they ran toward the place where the shrieking hiss of escaping steam screamed loud on the night.

They came up to the wreck, and a startled gasp escaped Joe at the sight. The locomotive lay on her side, with the tender halfway on top of the crushed cab. The front of the boiler

was bent and buckled all out of shape with the jacket stripped off in long, jagged tears, showing the white asbestos lagging beneath. All the fittings were torn off the boiler. Even the short, stubby stack was bent back and flattened out like a piece of crushed stovepipe.

"Bill, Bill!" Crab yelled loud above the whistle of the escaping steam that roared out of a broken branch pipe.

A voice answered. Together they went toward it. The engineer came up on the tracks, limping a little.

"Are you hurt, Bill?" was Crab's first question.

"Hell, I don't know," the other answered. "I hardly got through falling down that fill yet."

"How did it happen?" Crab asked.

"Beats me," Bill replied, straightening out his leg and rubbing his knee with both hands. "We were drifting along sweetly, making about thirty miles an hour. A straight track, a clear rail ahead—everything was lovely. I was thinking how we'd get in in nice time to go to the circus to-night. Suddenly I felt the trucks strike hard and lift. The drivers climbed the rail, and she settled back on the steel for a half minute. That give us our chance, or we'd be under her now. From the way she rolled I knew she wasn't going to stay on the rails long. I gave her the big hole, slapped her into emergency, and next second we were rattling over the cross ties. I felt her sway and knew she was going to turn over. I yelled to my fireboy to jump, and both of us did the bird act. She flopped as I cleared the gangway. Where is he, anyway?"

Hunting back along the train, they discovered the fireman lying beside the right of way, where he fell. He was still unconscious. Joe carried water in his hat from the ditch alongside the tracks and doused the senseless figure. The fireman stirred, opened his eyes, and sat up.

"Lord, what a bump!" he exclaimed foolishly. Then he motioned to the engineer. "Say, Bill, there's something rotten in Denmark. I happened to have my head out the window, looking ahead, just before she cat-hopped. She ran over something on the rail. I saw the sparks fly as she hit it."

Green Flag came running up.

"Hey, how's every one?" He noticed the engineer and fireman. "You fellows all right? Where's the rest of the crew? I've sent my flagman ahead to protect the main line, and the brakeman to Pineville station to report."

The old conductor had an instinct bred of many emergencies. His first thought was to keep any other train from running into the wreck. As the Glen Cove cut-off had only been built a short while before, the block signal system had not yet been installed.

"Come on, Nervy!" he yelled. "Come on back with me! Let's see how they fared back in the shanty!"

Joe followed the conductor over the jumbled litter of débris piled along the right of way. As they made their way around the tangled wreckage, a bobbing lantern approached.

"How's everything back there, Ed?" shouted West.

"O. K.," came the freight conductor's reply. "I've sent one man back to flag, the other to the telegraph shanty. How's it ahead?"

Green Flag heaved a sigh of relief as he went back toward the freight conductor. Joe Allen, not being needed there, turned to go up to the wrecked engine. As he did, in the light from his torch, he saw under the edge of a car something that attracted his atten-

tion. He crouched down to investigate. A coupling pin—a round steel rod headed on one end, a foot long and a couple of inches in diameter—lay on the ground. Joe saw that it was bent almost U-shaped. It was not this fact, however, so much as the sight of a deeply scored groove in the center of the steel pin that caused him to reach under after it. The engine ahead must have run over it; but how did it get on the rails?

He jumped, startled. In the hazy light reflected from the wavering, wind-blown torch he caught a brief glimpse of a figure vanishing around the other end of the slanting car.

THEY DOUSED WATER ON THE SENSELESS FIREMAN

A puff of wind swirled around the corner of the car and blew out his torch. In the darkness he felt for the pin, but could not find it. He heard a sound—a loose board rattling as if some one had stepped on it. He struck a match, lit his torch, and looked for the pin. It was gone.

As he jumped upon an overturned truck, his foot caught in the brake rigging and he stumbled. When he recovered himself, and held his torch high above his head, he could see nothing inside its circle of light except the litter of wreckage. He tried to convince himself that the whole thing was a mis-

take, that what he had taken for a bent coupling pin was nothing but a twisted piece of iron.

Going back to the corner of the car, he held up his torch and looked again. There was nothing remotely resembling what he had seen there before. Nevertheless, the creak of a board that he had heard above the dying noise of the steam blowing from the wrecked engine was no imaginary sound; and the moving shape that he had glimpsed was too much like that of a man crouched over to be a shadow cast by a flickering flambeau.

Whoever had been on the other side of that car was gone now, and it was useless to hunt for him. Joe had blundered into a situation a few nights ago; he still had a sore head from that. No telling what lay behind this new mystery. No telling what might happen if he set out alone to try to discover who had reached for that pin.

His first impulse was to go to Crab and the freight engineer, who stood beside the wrecked engine, and tell them of the occurrence; but he changed his mind. Little good they could do. This was a case for careful investigation. He decided to keep quiet, wait till morning, and see the colonel at the terminal.

XV

Joe went back to join Crab McAllister and the engineer and fireman of No. 93 beside the wrecked locomotive. Crab held his torch up.

"What's the matter, Nervy? You look like you seen a ghost back there. Wait till you been railroading as long as I have, and you won't pay much attention to a smash-up. They're nothing new to me. Come back on the 81, and let's improve the evening the best way we kin."

Joe shook his head and went over to where Bill was examining the flanges on his engine.

"You go on back if you feel like it," he told Crab. "I'll stay here and watch 'em when they come out to clean up this wreck. I want to see how the crew does its work."

Bill was down on his knees, looking at a flange on the slewed trucks. He pointed to a notch on one of them.

"She hit something all right," he said. "I wonder what it was!"

Joe did not reply. It would do no good to voice his suspicions now, for, although they were strong, he had nothing tangible to back them up.

The whistle of the wrecking train's engine sounded, and a few minutes later the big, long-armed crane, with its heavy hook hanging below like some antediluvian monster, poked its nose over the derailed locomotive.

A couple of the slings were passed under the boiler and the tank was disconnected. The wrecking foreman jerked his thumb up in little halting movements, and, with a flutter from her fast spinning engine, a rumbling grind of gears, and the snapping pop of taut steel cables, the big hook lifted. The engine rose with it, dangled clear of the ground, and was set back on the rails. The tank was but a plaything for that one-hundred-and-fifty-ton crane, and it was the work of only a few minutes to set it back on the steel again.

Joe rode on the wrecker when they hauled back to the far end of the passing track. He threw the switch, and they shoved 93's battered locomotive and tank up behind the Slabtown local. The engine at the back of the wrecking train again pushed her up to her work. The first dozen cars of the fast freight were off the rails and badly smashed

up, but the rear part of the train was not seriously injured.

Joe walked up to his engine, the 81. Crab had the seat cushions of both his own and Joe's seat boxes skillfully arranged, with the shaker bar resting on the window and the brake valve, forming a support for a couple of shovels, with their handles on his seat box and their blades pointing out. Joe's cushions were spread on the shovels.

Crab opened one eye and said in the tone that a hotel clerk might use to a belated traveler:

"Very sorry, my dear sir, but we have absolutely no place left for you tonight. One of our regular customers has just occupied the last bed."

JOE CROUCHED DOWN TO INVESTIGATE

Joe laughed.

"You sure have rigged up a comfortable-looking bunk," he said admir-

ingly. He turned his glance to his bare seat box. "If I wanted to sleep, I don't see where I'd come in."

"Aw, quit disturbing me," grunted Crab. "Climb up on the coal and stretch out there. It's soft coal."

But Joe was in no mood for sleeping now. He left Crab and walked back up the tracks to where a gang of men scurried about like Satan's imps in the wavering, wind-tossed light coming from a big wire basket of oil-soaked waste that blazed at the end of the derrick arm. When he arrived there, he saw the full extent of the smash-up. It was not as bad a wreck as he had imagined. Behind the dozen cars on the head end of 93, which were completely demolished, were half a dozen with broken ends and smashed sides, their contents having slid at the sudden jar of the stoppage. Behind these were a few cars that were derailed, but otherwise uninjured. The remainder of the train stood on the rails, undamaged.

Joe realized why this was so. When his engine jumped, the engineer had acted instantly. He had set every brake on his train, checking the momentum of the cars behind him sufficiently to save most of them.

He looked to where, traced by the bobbing torch that hung from it, the neck of the crane lowered and lifted, swinging sidewise as if possessed of life, and tossing the smashed box cars off the right of way. It was a weird scene, with a score of men moving around in the flickering, wavering light, the clang of steel, the ripping crash of splintering wood, the bang and smash of the overturned cars as they were lifted and sent crashing down the slope beside the tracks. The extra track forces—two gangs of at least half a hundred laborers—were at work behind the wrecking crane, straightening out the rails and respiking the steel to the cross ties.

During a lull, while the men were slipping the steel cables under a car, Joe said to the conductor:

"They don't seem to care how rough they handle those cars. Looks like some of them might be repaired."

"Huh, they ain't worrying about that. Their whole idea is to clear the main line as quick as possible. Everything's being delayed now, and what's a few box cars mean compared to a tie-up?"

"But look!" Joe pointed to where a broken car was being lifted up. A pile of boxes slid out at the splintered end and burst open. The bright flash of tin cans was followed by a metallic rattle. "Those cars are loaded. That stuff's worth money."

The conductor shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, yes," he replied carelessly. "It's up to the claim department to square with the shippers. These fellows have nothing to do with that. The division's tied up, and they've got to get it open. They've got to get the trains to running as soon as they can. Rolling stock, freight, equipment destroyed—that don't worry them. I never seen a wreck yet but what the natives for miles around didn't take advantage of it to loot. I ain't seen nothing of Belnap to-night. He generally gets out and protects the freight, but I guess he's in a jam somewhere around the terminal, where the bunch has been lifting something frequent and successful during the last month. Which reminds me," the conductor added, "we've got a couple of cars back on this train that are loaded with merchandise—hardware. I guess I'd better skip back and see how things are."

Joe stood watching the extra force

pitching boxes out of the way with absolutely no regard for their contents. Presently he heard his name called.

"Hey, Joe, let's get at it!" his conductor shouted. "We're to amble on as soon as the line is clear."

Back on the 81, Joe woke Crab up to tell him that the track ahead would soon be clear, and that they were due to leave when they got the signal. The engine that brought the wrecking crew out was going to take the remainder of 93's train back with it.

"That's a nice hand they deal us!" Crab grumbled. "I thought they might annul the Slabtown tonight and send us back with that stuff. To-morrow is Sunday, our day off, and we wouldn't have had to come in. I was figgering just like that, and now—aw, hell!"

"All right, Crab!" the conductor called from the ground. "Come to! They got it clear for us. Let's get on! I see 'em waving us on."

Crab got out of his bunk, stretched himself and yawned.

"Aw, hell!" he growled. "I was just having a sweet dream, and you fellows got to yell me out of it!" He reached up for the whistle cord and blew a *boot, boot,* on the whistle. "Let down your vapor, old girl," he muttered, as he flopped the reverse lever ahead and reached for the throttle.

It was midnight before they reached Slabtown. By the time Joe had banked his fire and got his engine in shape, it was two o'clock. He went back to the shanty car, stretched out on the cushions, and fell asleep.

When he awoke it was to the sound of a call close beside the car. He rose. The gray dawn was spreading over the sky. He glanced at his watch. It was six o'clock.

"Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!" the call sounded again close to the shanty.

Joe sat up on the edge of the bunk, slipped on his shoes and went outside. He knew that no bird had made that sound. Just outside the door he made out what he expected to see—a standing figure of a girl half hidden behind a tree.

"Heyho!" he said, going over toward her.

"Howdy?" returned Mary Lee Cowsie.

A pause followed. Then Joe asked: "What is it?"

The girl came closer.

"I—I jest want to warn ye. I done heared Sneed Cowsie a rarin' and a rantin' late last night. He come by Yaller Hill jest as a frolic I war to war breakin' up, and he took me up yere. He air got him a new cyar. He's done got money too, now. He war a drinkin' an' a talkin'. He's done got hit in fer ye. Ye'd better not give him a chance at ye, 'case he air shore aimin' to do ye dirt."

Joe reached out his hand and caught hers in his.

"Thanks for the warning," he said. "Although I hardly need it. Sneed, I know, has no love for me, but I'm not disturbed. I'm a part of the railroad now, an employee on duty. If he interferes with me he'll have the company to fight."

"Huh!" came the reply. "Little good thet'll do ye if yer belly stops a chunk o' lead! I've warned ye—now set yerself!"

Joe laughed lightly.

"And tell Sneed for me that he'd better be leaving, because next time I see him the notion might strike me to shoot first!"

"Well, Joey," she said, "I know ye have no fear o' Sneed Cowsie. We-uns done heared up yere how ye took his gun away from him and made him

eat dirt." She scuffled at the ground with the toe of her shoe, colored, and hesitated for a moment. Then she spoke boldly. "I know ye're a better man, Joey, than Sneed Cowsie'll ever be. Ye know, Sneed's been castin' sheeps' eyes at me fer some time now, but I got no time fer trash like him. Last night he war tryin' to get me to go out riding with him in his new car. He tried to buss me one, and I kicked him." Mary Lee cast a long glance through half closed eyes at Joe—a glance that conveyed far more than the words that followed. "O' course, Joey, it mought be different with some people. I wouldn't kick them."

Joe made no response.

After a pause, Mary Lee said softly:

"I'm 'spectin' to be in town fust day o' the week, Joey. Ye reckon we-uns—"

Her sentence was not finished. She looked off to one side, where a man walked through the early morning mist toward the mill building.

"Gollee, thar's my pap! He'd lift the hide off'n my back if he war to see me out yere this time o' day, talkin' to a railroad man!"

As she turned to leave, she cast a glance over her shoulder, smiled roguishly, and added:

"But at that, I'd take a chance on hit, Joey!"

XVI

THEY were chugging along leisurely half a mile out of Slabtown. Joe sat on his seat box, his elbow on the sill, looking over the scenery passing by. He noted the dry woods on either side. There had been an unusual drought for the past few months, a dry summer following a dry spring. The distant mountains, range on range to the westward, were etched clear-cut against a cloudless sky.

Nearer, the woods looked parched and shriveled, and close at hand Joe saw that the ground beneath the trees was dun brown, ankle deep with a thick carpet of dry litter. Glancing the 81's stack, he mentally made note to have the spark arrester reported on the work slip. If those woods caught fire they would go like tinder.

He looked back over the train behind. They were on a straight track; he could see the rails glistening in the morning sun, could see the sawmill and could hear the whining squeal of the saw as it bit into a log. Straight back he looked beyond Slabtown, back to where a low gap showed in the mountains. One day several years ago, when he was out deer hunting, he had followed Grassy Branch all the way to that gap in Chestnut Ridge, where the creek had its source in a clear spring of cold water, bubbling out from the rocks.

Suddenly, as he looked back, an idea bloomed full-grown in his mind. The right of way, a straight and almost level piece of road, if continued on past Slabtown, would go up to Chestnut Ridge Gap. Beyond that there was the gently sloping country of the Piedmont, and beyond the Piedmont lay the flat coast land. Joe's eyes were half closed while he thought over the idea.

Mentally he pictured the Slabtown run continued on. Through his mind came the remembrance of a day when he climbed Glassy Knob, one of the highest peaks of the district. From its summit he could see the line of smoke marking the railroad below him, could see how it bent in a crescent, how it wound about in the mountains, seeking an easy grade; for a locomotive, powerful as it is, is like a feeble old

man on a hill. He recalled how that day he had seen the straight line that led from Glen Cove up past Slabtown and through Chestnut Ridge, and could see where it would intersect the main line again far beyond, in the hazy distance.

His face became studious and reflective. The Glen Cove cut-off was a new piece of road. It had been open for only a couple of years. It had been constructed, Joe knew, to eliminate a bad piece of roadway on the main line. What a chance, he thought, there would be to extend the cut-off to Slabtown, what a chance to save time and grades!

He wondered why no one, apparently, had never thought of it before. Then he remembered the gossip of an old engineer—Pat Monnahan, retired—whom Joe met at the pool room one day. Pat had worked for the road when it belonged to the State, a little political line that started nowhere and wound up in much the same sort of place. He had told Joe of the fights and plots of those early days of railroading, and how the road had acquired a bit of track here and another piece there, how it had bought some and practically stolen others. Then, little by little, these isolated jerkwater branches had been combined to form the present system.

Perhaps, thought Joe, his idea was wild and visionary. On the other hand, it might already have been contemplated by the management of the road. Above the low shuffle of the engine's exhaust and the clatter of her progress, all unaware that he spoke, came Joe's words:

"Why, why, I'm right in line—"

He turned from his survey, and his eyes swept the nearer woods. Suddenly, with an action that was startling in its abruptness, he flung himself off his seat box in a rolling twist and fell flat on the steel floor of the cab. Almost simultaneous with his action, above the noise of the working engine, a rifle shot crashed. With the crash, a round hole appeared in the left side window, directly in line with where he had been sitting. Over Crab's head, on the opposite side of the cab, the wooden ceiling splintered.

Whang! The ringing thud of a steel bullet mushrooming against a steel plate reverberated loud. *Zing!* Another glanced off the boiler head, scored a long streak in the brass trim, and richochetted, whining, out of the window.

An engineer's first instinctive impulse in an emergency is to "slap on the air." With a startled "What the—" Crab's left hand shot out toward the brake valve handle.

"No, not that!" yelled Joe. "Open her up, get away from here!"

The engineer turned a puzzled, startled countenance toward his fireman as he jerked the throttle lever wide open. The exhaust crashed loud, and the engine quickly picked up speed. Joe rose from the floor and dusted himself off.

"Say, what's it all about?" Crab asked. "Why did some one take that pot shot at you? I guess I needn't ask, though. You've fallen for one of those women, and you'll get yours!"

"No, Crab," Joe replied. "It goes farther back than that. I'm sorry, though, that my being on the engine exposed you to danger; but that's all I care to tell about it."

"Whew!" Crab whistled, wiping off his forehead. "That's all, is it? Well, I'm done. Those bullets sounded too personal to me. I'll see the colonel today. My thirty days isn't up by a long

time, and lots of things can happen before then. A nice way to start a Sunday morning!"

On arriving at the terminal, the train crew presented themselves in the superintendent's office with a demand that they should be relieved of the run; but the colonel refused.

"I'll not allow any of the men on this division to be driven off a run," he said. "I appreciate how you feel about it, and I'll protect you; but till I get a regular crew on the Slabtown local, you fellows will have to hold it down."

"Regular crew, huh!" Crab snorted. "Any guy that would elect to take that job of his own free will is cuckoo!"

Joe, keenly watching the superintendent, saw the faint glimmer of a smile cross his face.

"Perhaps, McAllister," the colonel retorted, "and perhaps not so cuckoo as you imagine. I'll post the bulletin today, and then we'll see how things stand. In the meantime, I assure you that I shall do all in my power to see that this morning's affair is not repeated."

The interview was over. The superintendent had asked for no details. Enough for him to know that some one was interfering with the movement of the trains. Crab, the conductor, and the brakeman filed out. Joe stood facing the superintendent. He waited till the others had left, and glanced at Upson, who was sitting at a small desk in the corner.

"Well, Allen, what is it?" the superintendent asked.

"Why, colonel, I saw something last night out at the wreck, and I figure you'd be interested in knowing it."

"All right—let's have it."

Joe again looked over at Upson, who was shuffling some papers with a great show of industry.

"I—I'd rather say what I have to say to you alone."

Upson took the hint and left the room, with a rather reluctant manner. As he went past Joe toward the door, the latter noticed that the chief clerk, usually so cocksure and overbearing, kept his head turned away, and would not look Joe in the face. After he had gone, Joe promised himself that as soon as he got through telling the superintendent what he felt it his duty to say he would collar Upson and have it out with the fellow.

It did not occur to Joe to inform the colonel of what Sneed Cowsie had told him the other day. He had thought, at the time, that that affair was settled. Now he knew that it was far from being settled; but he considered it his own personal quarrel, outside and away from the railroad.

Alone with him, Joe told the superintendent of the incident of the coupling pin.

"I'm certain, colonel, some one grabbed that just as I got there. It strikes me that 93 was no accidental wreck. I'm just as certain it was done on purpose—"

He stopped and waited while Upson, with an "Excuse me," came into the room, went over to the desk, opened a drawer, and pulled out a sheaf of papers. It struck Joe forcibly that the clerk was worried. He wondered why, as he watched the man leaving the room.

The superintendent leaned back in his chair. His eyes narrowed.

"Whew!" he whistled. "Allen, this is serious. I'm glad you came to me with it before you told any one else. I wonder why they wrecked 93! Perhaps—"

A gleam of understanding crossed his face. He reached for the telephone and got his connection.

"Yard office! Say, were the cars off 93 checked?"

After a pause, Joe heard him gasp:

"Oh, oh, you say one of the cars that was not wrecked? Seals broken, eh, when it got in? Get down there at once, check it, and let me know how it tallies with the bills!"

He hung up.

"Not a word to any one, Allen. I think at last I'm on the track of who's behind our box car robberies!" He reached over and caught Joe by the hand. "You've certainly shown good judgment, Allen, by keeping this thing to yourself till you had a chance to see me; and the evidence you've brought me this morning is just about what we need. You go back on your run tomorrow night, and we'll see what happens from then on."

Joe left the room. Out in the hallway he saw Upson. As Joe opened the door the chief clerk had either come out of the other office or was just going in to it. He hesitated at the doorway, as if undecided whether to retreat or to advance.

Joe made his decision for him. With a quick stride the young fireman stepped forward and his arm swept out. Grasping a handful of Upson's coat and shirt, he jerked the fellow toward him with one hand and gently closed the door behind him with the other. Then he swung Upson around and slammed him into a corner. Shaking his finger an inch away from the clerk's face, he spoke through gritted teeth.

"You put Sneed Cowsie up to what he did! You tried to get him to shoot my father! I throttled that out of Sneed."

Upson's face turned ashy gray. For a moment he choked and stammered; then he recovered himself.

"Are you crazy?" he said. "What would I want with that place? Why, I've never had anything to do with the affair." He forced a mirthless, nervous grin to his face. "You believe Sneed Cowsie, do you? Well, you're the only one who would!"

Joe's grip relaxed. He realized that he had let his anger get the better of his judgment. He had absolutely nothing on Upson save his own dislike, for it was true that Sneed Cowsie's word was worthless. Nevertheless, he knew that for once Sneed had told the truth, just as well as he knew that Upson had clearly lied out of it.

As the chief clerk hastily walked away, Joe sent a parting shot after him.

"You got by this time, Upson; but next time, if there is another time, your lying mouth won't save your hide!"

Still boiling inwardly at Upson's successful evasion, Joe went downstairs and over to the Railroad Y. M. C. A. There, from the booth in the lobby, he called June Eagle; and at the sound of her voice he forgot all about the affair of last night and the more recent one of a few minutes ago.

"Oh, is this you, Joe? I was just thinking about you. Come on up this evening. We'll have dinner together. Wait a minute—dad has just said something. Let me find out what it is. Oh, yes, certainly," Joe heard her say, in reply to Jack Eagle's unintelligible words. "Joe," she went on, "dad wants you to come as early as you can. He's got something on his mind. He says he wants to 'chew the string' with you about it. No, I don't know what it is. He probably wants to railroad a bit." She laughed. "There's been more terrible wrecks happening right in our front room, and more fast runs made across the dining room table than the road has seen in ten years!"

Joe's ill humor was gone when he hung up the receiver. Upson and Sneed Cowsie, wrecks and shootings, seemed small and unimportant things to him compared to that rippling, musical laugh of June Eagle's, and the warmth of real feeling she was capable of putting into three short words:

"Do come early!"

XVII

JOE waited until three o'clock, and then he became fidgety. He knew that dinner would not be before half past six or seven o'clock, but those intervening three or four hours would pass very quickly in June Eagle's company, and very slowly here in the Y. M. C. A. lobby, listening to the gang off duty telling what wonderful railroad men they were. He rose from his chair and looked over at a group that stood before the window. One, an engineer, was speaking.

"Yeh, I'm good, all right," he announced modestly. "That jack they gimme was a total loss. It should have gone into the hands of a receiver six months before, but I took her out on that extra and babied her along. She had a bad set of grates in her, she needed a boiler wash, and her packing on the right side was blowing like—"

"Yourself," some one of the group suggested.

"Like hell," the engineer continued. "Well, I see how things were going. The steam was dropping down every minute. I says to my fireboy, 'Boy, get yourself up on this seat and keep your eye peeled. I'll show you how to keep a jack hot!' I laid a nice little fire in her, and I had her popping inside of fifteen minutes. I made that run in four hours, flat, from yard board to yard board. If that isn't good, I'm asking you what is?"

A grizzled old engineer who had been sitting in a corner rose at the conclusion of the tale and walked over to the narrator.

"Stoop down, Flannelmouth," he said in a serious tone.

Flannelmouth obligingly bent his knees.

"A little lower."

When he had the other man teetering on his hams in a crouching position the old engineer walked slowly around him and surveyed him with his own head cocked on one side.

"All right now, Flannelmouth; you can stand up," he said. "I just wanted to see if your halo was on straight."

In the laugh that followed, Joe left and went up the street, turned the corner and stopped. Down the hill that led up to June's house Upson's roadster came speeding. Upson himself sat crouched down over the wheel, chewing savagely on the butt of a cigar. He made the turn on two wheels, kicked the muffler open, and roared out of sight, a cloud of dust following him.

"He rides alone to-day," Joe said to himself, "and he doesn't seem to be enjoying his own company much."

A few minutes later he clicked the knocker on the Eagles' front door. June answered. She held out her hand.

"Come on in, Joe! I'm glad to see you. How's the head coming on?"

"Oh, it's all right, Miss June. I think the doctor's keeping it bandaged up to make business good." He laughed. "You know the company pays him so much per treatment, and I think he aims to keep my head wrapped up till my hair shoves this off over the top!"

June took his hat.

"Come on in and talk to dad," she said. "He's all primed up, and I'll let him get run down before I interfere.

Besides, there's a letter I simply must write. By the time I've finished it perhaps you two will have the railroad all arranged to your own satisfaction."

She walked over to her desk in the corner of the room. Jack called from the other room.

"Come on in, Nervy! I just got into the latest copy of the company magazine."

He indicated a chair across the room, and Joe seated himself. Through the door he could see June's profile as she bent over her writing. He listened to Jack Eagle while he looked at June.

"Seen this month's issue, Joe?" Jack asked.

"I got it through the mail yesterday, but I haven't read it," replied Joe. "What's all this that you want to tell me?"

"Just this—I see where the company has ordered some of the latest heavy freight locomotives—monsters, Joe—2-10-2 Santa Fe type. They'll make our old motive power look sick. Here's something else to make you arch your eyebrows. There's a Baldwin mallet deadheading over the way here now. It's a big one, that elephant—two sets of drivers, two wheel trucks, front and rear, and two sets of cylinders. By George, I'll bet when that hundred-seventy-five-ton brute leans against a string of cars they'll either move or else buckle up like folding foot rules! I wonder what service this new motive power is scheduled for?"

He settled himself in his big leather chair and turned the pages of the magazine.

"And I see where they're going to open up the ballast pits down at the foot of Six Mile Hill on the main line," he continued. "They've been out of service for a year now, since they got the ballast out of them for the Glen Cove cut-off. Here's another thing I don't quite understand. 'Seventy-five hundred tons of ninety-pound rail have been ordered for our division,' it says."

The engineer pulled a pencil from his pocket and figured on the edge of the magazine.

"There's enough steel to run a single track for fifty miles. I can't figure where it's to be laid. The main line and the Glen Cove cut-off are all new heavy steel now, and won't need renewing for several years. This motive power, that puzzles me, too. What do they want with these compound passenger engines? They're for fast, sustained runs, and we've got none of those on this division. Why, there's only a few eight-mile or ten-mile straight level stretches where I can widen out on the 1001. The rest of the time she's got to pick her way around sharp bends or labor up the grades."

He looked up at Joe.

"We've got none of these jacks on our runs. How do they rate, Joe? You've been keeping up with the latest developments."

The engineer's question caused Joe to start. Jack was a man of experience, an engineer of twenty-five years "age," who was railroading before Joe was born, but now he had given the young fireman the supreme compliment. He was asking for information.

Joe considered.

"I recall reading a description of them, Jack, some time ago," he said. "They're the latest development of the Baldwins. Old Sam Vauclain says they're the finest yet, and he's nobody's fool when it comes to mentioning locomotives. They're fine machines for the service they were designed for—that is, fast runs. As I remember, they have a good pick-up. They're equipped with intercepting valves, so that, on starting,

live steam can be worked through the low pressure cylinders, which gives them a tremendous drawbar pull. And they're high drivers—seventy-eight inch. Once one gets to rolling, she ought to ramble right along; but, as you say, we don't need that class of motive power. We've got grades to pull here, and our principal load is coal. The passenger and fast freight service is of minor importance. We need low-wheeled jacks that will buckle down on a hill and grunt up a five-per-cent rise with a long string of loaded cars following."

Jack Eagle shook his head.

"Joe, those five-per-cent pulls have got to go. The company has competition now. The new road, the Interstate, is out for business, and is getting it. They practically parallel our system from the coalfields to tidewater, and to the coaling works on the ocean. Our road just happened. As of course you know, it's a combination of several local railways. It was built in sections at various times and without much regard to either direct routes or minimum grades. The Interstate is a new road, well engineered, on a carefully laid out roadbed. Half of one per cent is their maximum grade, and their sharpest curve is on a thousand-foot radius. They've got it on us. They can haul a bigger tonnage and make better time. A year from now the mail contract is relet. Unless the company gets busy in the meantime, we stand a sweet chance of losing that, and a fat subsidy with it.

"The hauling of coal has been a big source of revenue to us," continued Jack. "We've specialized on it; but there are other classes of freight that are better revenue producers than coal. There's a peach crop—just a few weeks of it, but I'll bet in two weeks it will bring in more money than the coal does in two months. There's other fast perishables—melons, citrus fruits from away down South, the strawberry crop. There's live stock, and there's the tourist. A big business awaits the road; but we'll have to nip a lot of time from some of our schedules in order to get it. Say, Joe, do you realize that our crack train, the Blue Streak, only averages thirty-five miles an hour? Compare that to some of the trains that compete for the Chicago-New York travel, nearly a thousand miles in eighteen hours, an average speed of fifty-five miles an hour. I tell you, we're behind the times. I think the old conservative bunch that were running things here are due for a jolt. Our stock has not paid dividends for a couple of years. There's a shake-up coming that'll jar the system clear down till even the section crews feel its tremor. I'll just bet we're going to see a change, and soon, around here!"

Jack's voice rumbled on. Joe caught the words without listening to them, for he was thinking that what Jack was telling him lined up with the thoughts that had been in his own mind that morning. He recalled what the superintendent had said. The colonel knew, else why had he suggested, as a favor to Joe Allen, that Joe should mark up regular on the Slabtown.

He looked up as June rose in the other room and came in to them. She spoke to her father.

"You two clear out on the porch and give us a chance to set the table, if you expect the diner to serve your meal on schedule!"

Out on the front porch Joe had little to say, for he was piecing together scattered bits of information, tying up the loose ends of what he had seen and heard in the last few weeks. When

June called them to dinner, all his surmises and deductions led to one conclusion.

XVIII

AFTER dinner June and Joe went out on the front porch. Darkness had fallen, but the moon and stars were large. They rocked slowly back and forth in the swing for a few minutes. They could see Jack Eagle sitting inside, reading.

June leaned close to Joe, and said in a low voice:

"Joe, you're worried. I could tell that from the way you sat so studious and silent to-night. I wonder if there's anything I could do!"

"I don't know, Miss June, if any one can do anything for me."

Then, feeling as if he must unburden himself to some one—and who would understand him better than June Eagle, who already knew something of his troubles?—he told her of Sneed Cowsie, and how Sneed had shot at him that morning.

June drew in a sharp breath.

"I overheard your father mention that name," she said. "He warned you about Sneed Cowsie. Oh, Joe, wouldn't it be better for you to get off that run, away from those terrible people to whom a life means so little?"

He did not reply, but leaned back in the porch swing and gazed at the girl beside him, silhouetted against the light from the room behind. He saw the thoughtful expression on her face, noted how her shapely head was set on her delicate neck, saw the sweet curve of her rounded shoulder, the clear-cut features. She raised her hand carelessly to brush a wisp of curling hair back from her face. Her hand, white, well kept, with polished nails, her thin wrist, the slender, high-arched foot that tapped the porch, all proclaimed June Eagle a thoroughbred.

She looked up.

"Joe, you have indeed a problem to work out," she said; "and I—I don't know what I can do to help you."

There was a deep understanding in her that caused Joe's heart to beat fast. There was warm sympathy in her tone, and a little mist of tears gathered in her deep blue eyes.

"I wish—I wish I could," she went on, smiling sadly. "I wish I could be of help!"

The next instant his arms were around her, and his lips pressed hers. As he held her tight, he felt her soft bosom rising and falling, felt her heart throbbing against his chest. In the shelter of the wistaria vine that draped the porch he held June Eagle and felt her bare, warm arms around his neck. Swept away by the delicious thrill of the moment, he softly said:

"It's you and I now, June, you and I together. The railroad, Sneed Cowsie, and everything else seem like nothing compared with you and me!"

He left her soon afterward, promising that he would see her again tomorrow morning.

Early next morning Joe went uptown to the jeweler's and bought a ring, a solitaire set in a thin white platinum band, with never a qualm of conscience at the price demanded. It was to be June's, and to Joe there was nothing too good for her. Nor did he haggle at the pawnshop, later, when he handled the automatic pistol set out for his inspection.

"Like a rifle she shoots, ten shots quick. We got a extra clip what makes a pocket machine gun out of her. Twenty-five shots she holds. We got a wooden holster. You slip it over, so. Here you got a long range gun what

kills at five hundred yards. It's a real bargain, my friend. Nine millimeter caliber—a real German Lüger."

Joe bought it and a box of steel-jacketed shells to fit it, and carried them wrapped in a paper under his arm. Here he had protection. At close quarters, this weapon would be far more effective than a rifle.

He stopped at the book store and bought half a dozen government topographical maps, showing the contour of the land for a hundred miles about the mountain country. Then he called at June's home to present the ring. She took the little velvet-lined box and opened it, and a gasp of pleasure escaped her.

"Oh, Joe, it's lovely!" Then she laughed. "You certainly don't lose any time. Who said anything about engagement rings? But—"

She moved toward him. He stretched out his hands. The package under his arm clattered to the porch floor and split open. The ugly blue-black foreign-made pistol thumped heavily on the floor. June stopped, her eyes widened.

"What—what is that for, Joe?" she questioned in a strained, startled voice.

"Oh, I was just preparing myself in case of need," he answered, a foolish grin on his face.

The grin was wiped away the next second, when June exclaimed:

"Joe Allen, you wouldn't kill that man, would you?"

He nodded.

"Certainly, June, my dear. Can't you understand? I'll never be safe as long as he's alive. As long as I am on that run and he's out there, he's a constant menace hanging over me. Of course, the colonel has promised protection, but—"

"Oh, Joe!" Her voice was pleading now. "Won't you quit that job? Won't you bid in some other run away from there? Won't you—for me?"

He stood hesitant, thinking for a minute. To give up the run now would be to admit that Sneed had driven him off. Besides that, there was the superintendent. What would the colonel think? "Nervy Joe," they called him. Was Nervy Joe to be intimidated by a couple of shots that missed? He felt the crinkle of the maps in his inside coat pocket.

"No, June, I can't do that," he told her, shaking his head.

In a daze, he saw her strip the ring from her finger, saw her eyes fill with tears.

"You know your own mind, Joe Allen," she said sadly, "and I know mine." She handed him the ring. "I couldn't have a man come to me with blood on his hands. Good-by, Joe. Perhaps you'll see my viewpoint—before it is too late."

She turned, crying as she went into the house. For a moment he stood looking at the glittering piece of jewelry in his hand. An impulse to call her back, to yield to her pleading, was put aside.

He dropped the ring carelessly into his coat pocket, picked up the gun, and went down the stairs. When he came to the gate, he stopped and almost persuaded himself to go back. June, watching him through tear-dimmed eyes from the window, saw him square his shoulders, throw back his head, and walk rapidly down the street.

"After all," she sobbed softly to herself, "perhaps what Mr. Upson says about him is true!"

XIX

BACK in his room, Joe Allen sat before the table, staring at the books and

papers that he had been studying in his spare time, but not seeing them. His head was between his hands, and he was thinking.

Much as the job he held meant to him, June meant more; yet only through it could he soon gain the things that she was accustomed to—a good home, the comforts and luxuries that made life pleasant. And she, all unknowing, wanted him to quit the Slabtown local.

He raised his head and glanced at the maps spread carelessly on the table.

"I only wish I could tell her, but I can't. I'm not sure yet myself. If what I suspect ever gets to be common knowledge, I'm due for a long time bucking the extra board. Some older man will take the Slabtown run. Some fellow with more age will bump me off the job."

The afternoon slowly passed. He pulled out his watch. It was an hour before starting time. He changed into his working clothes, slipped the gun into his back overall pocket and the maps inside his jumper. Then he went downstairs, walked up the street, and crossed the yards to the roundhouse.

The crew of the local were in the wash room, changing their clothes. Crab pointed to the bulletin.

"Give a look, Nervy," he said. "Here's your shining chance to get a regular run. It's a sweet job, that one posted there. It's a swell opportunity for you to get on as a hoghead. They're going to stock bullet-proof vests over at the commissary. I hear they're going to put on an armored shanty for the crummy, and the crew'll get two hours' overtime pay every day on account o' target practice. Better bid that in, Nervy," Crab advised. "It's the very run for the likes o' you."

Joe did not reply. Instead, he scanned the bulletin. The superintendent had done as he said—he had posted the Slabtown local. Now the job would belong to the first engineer who marked up for it.

Later, when the 81 coupled up to her train, Joe saw that the colonel had carried out all his promises. The special agent and the deputy sheriffs arrived with sawed-off shotguns and climbed up into the caboose. At the Glen Cove cut-off four other armed officers got on the train; but either Sneed was warned or he had left the vicinity, for nothing untoward occurred that night.

A week passed, and in spite of Crab's prophecy that something was going to turn up to relieve him from the run, nothing happened. The crew of the Slabtown local continued to grumble at their distasteful job. Each evening they made the run up, were ready to leave when they got to the end of the trip, and left in short order —all save Joe Allen.

Joe viewed the hectic rush with an amused tolerance, for he was really beginning to enjoy his nights. At first it was quiet and peaceable up there, with no distractions to disturb him. He could curl up comfortably in the corner of the caboose, with a lantern hung on the wall behind him, and read till his eyes grew tired. At midnight he would go out, fill the engine's boiler with water, give the fire a little attention, and then turn in on the caboose cushions for the rest of the night.

But soon a distraction began to break into his reading. What man could read when Mary Lee Cowsie called? When she first visited him, Joe used to sit in the caboose door, his feet dangling outside, while she stood on the ground and talked to him; but a convenient pile of lumber soon became

their seat. Before long his books in the locker beneath the cushions in the caboose grew dusty, and were hidden under the growing jumble of flimsies and outdated newspapers thrown carelessly over them. They only mirrored life, while Mary Lee was life itself.

Often, when Joe sat talking to her, his thoughts abruptly jumped to June Eagle, whom he saw occasionally; but June, although friendly, had lost her cordiality. As time passed he met her less and less frequently, though several evenings, just as he was starting out to go on his run, he saw her passing in Upson's car. He got what little satisfaction he could from the friendly wave she always gave him when she saw him. She was still enshrined on a pedestal in his regard, a radiant creature to be admired and adored, while Mary Lee was of his own kind — a woman who could love a man with fierce, single-minded intensity, and who could hate as fervently. She did not object to a man carrying a gun for his own defense, nor would she see anything wrong in his using it.

Little by little an idea took hold of Joe. How simple it would be to settle all the old score between the Allens and her people! How easy it would be to make love to Mary Lee! She was expecting it. A short, hectic courtship, and then he would marry her and build a home here. He would fire the Slabtown local, and in time be promoted to engineer. It would be a good run. He could have the comforts and luxuries of town and spend every night at home. Sneed Cowsie's hands would be tied, for by the code of the mountains he could not lift weapon against his kin.

On the other hand, to do that would be to drop back into the life from which Joe had so laboriously climbed. His books, and all that was in them, would count for nothing then. Life would become a simple thing, and the struggle for success, for advancement, would all be done.

Things could not go on as they were, however. Mary Lee was not one to drift with the current. She suspected more than she knew, and she knew more than Joe imagined.

One night they sat in the darkness, the dim glow from the smoldering waste pile behind the sawmill occasionally spurting up a flame with a rich light. Mary Lee was rather quiet that night.

"What you so still about, Mar?" asked Joe.

After a long pause, she answered:

"You, Joey."

"Why me?"

"Well, I'll tell ye, Joey. Sneed's back yere agin, liquored up. He's heard about we-uns. He 'lows as how he's goin' to stop hit. I ain't seen him, but others have told me to watch out."

"But what has he to do with you?" Joe questioned.

He felt her lean closer to him, felt her warm shoulder pressed against his and a wind-blown strand of her hair brushed gently against his face. By a supreme effort he checked his impulse to put his arms around her, to tell her to forget Sneed Cowsie, to tell her—

He waited for her reply—waited for a long time. A stealthy footfall rustled the dry chips in the darkness behind them. He felt her stiffen.

"Hit's him, I 'speck," she whispered fiercely, grabbing Joe's arm. "Git ye hid, Joey! I'll be holdin' him yere. He's likely got him a gun."

Joe felt the bulk of his pistol in his hip pocket, and sat obdurate.

"I'm waiting for him to show himself," he said tensely.

The next moment her arms were around him, her lips close to his.

"Go, Joey, go! He's sure to have a gun. Go fer my sake," she whispered, a hard, nervous note in her voice. "If ye tangle, I'll git blamed fer hit."

her answer. "Do ye hope to have me ask ye when to come and go?"

"Yore pap would shore be mad to larn o' these yere doin's," was the reply.

Joe's fist clenched, his eyes snapped. He half started to step out and con-

"I TELL YE, JOEY," SAID MARY LEE, "SNEED'S HEARD ABOUT WE-UNS."

Joe reluctantly obeyed, his heart strangely aflutter, but not from any fear of what Sneed Cowsie might do. It was hard for him to hold himself in restraint when, standing beside the caboose, he heard a man's voice call:

"Mary Lee! What air ye a doin', a skulkin' out yere in the darkness?"

"How come ye make hit yore affair, Sneed, what I elect to do?" Joe heard

front Sneed. His ready left fist was bunched in a tight knot of knuckles, his arm tensed. His right hand felt the checkered walnut grip of his pistol.

Then his better judgment took command of his anger. It would do no good to fight Sneed, and it would only make trouble for Mary Lee to confront him now. Her people would make life miserable for her if Sneed Cowsie informed them of the secret

meetings beside the train after dark; and Sneed was not above doing so.

At that instant two thoughts lapped each other in Joe Allen's mind. One was a great desire to protect the girl, the other a still greater contempt for Sneed Cowsie. But for her he would have settled it with Sneed then and there.

He heard footfalls on the cinders, and a spurt of flame from the slab pile showed them walking away from him between the tracks. Mary Lee feared trouble, and was leading Sneed off.

Their voices grew dim, and a few minutes later Joe heard them no more. He climbed up into the caboose and lay down on the cushions, and for an hour he wrestled with his problem. The easy way out of all the baffling worry that lay before him, the easy way and the pleasant way—Mary Lee, a white cottage on one of the hills above Slabtown, a regular run, a sure, steady job, the saving of a bit of money. When age crept upon him, he would sit back and take life in ease and contentment. There would be stalwart sons and good-looking daughters to comfort a man in the autumn of his life.

But even as the picture unfolded, he distrusted it. Was it but a mirage, a will-o'-the-wisp? The worm of unrest had found lodgment in his heart, the sublime discontent called ambition was part of his make-up. The hard path he had started on—it would always be his way. He would travel on his own rocky road that led to the high places. A bit of star dust—he had read that somewhere—a bit of star dust burned bright in him.

Could Mary Lee's trim feet follow the road he traveled? Could Mary Lee's mind grasp the far-flung realm of knowledge he had entered? He fell asleep that night with the words on his lips:

"Can I go where I want to go, and lead her there too?"

Then he thought of June Eagle. June could follow him—yes, and more than follow. She could lead him!

TO BE CONTINUED

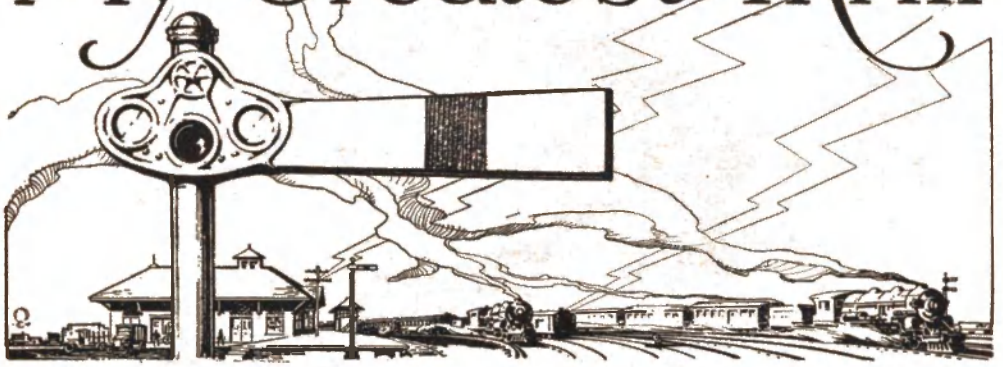
DROPPING PASSENGER COACHES WITHOUT STOPPING

SOMETHING in the nature of a feat in railroading is reported from London by United States Trade Commissioner Harold A. Burch, who states in *Commerce Reports* that certain British express trains drop coaches at intermediate stations *en route* without coming to a halt. For example, travelers for Westbury, Taunton and Exeter, which are not scheduled stops on the daily run of the Cornish Riviera Express from Paddington to Plymouth, can now board that train and journey to their separate destinations in special coaches provided for them. These coaches are at the end of the string of cars, and are successively "slipped" or left behind by the moving train. Ordinarily, only one "slip coach" is carried; the Cornish Riviera Express is the only one to accomplish the feat of dropping three.

This is achieved by a so-called slipping apparatus which effects the uncoupling and the braking of only the special coaches—the disconnected airbrake line and the heating pipe in each case being automatically sealed.

Apparently, the system is making it possible to give the traveling public increased express service upon lines already carrying all the traffic that they could accommodate under ordinary circumstances.

My Greatest Thrill



A department where true experiences of railroad men are related. Prompt payment at good rates is offered for narratives of personal thrills. Each story must be verified.

Horse Medicine

The Man on the Trick at "DI" Forgives and Forgets the Vile Station at "G"

By R. A. Snyder

IT was back in the days when I worked a trick on the train wire up in the green hills of northern Vermont. I had heard of men saying they get a thrill out of railroading, but to me it was all just one dog-gone day after another with nothing but a humdrum existence. I was sort of an all round utility man, and every once in a while the chief would send me out on the line to bat in a pinch. You see, I was only a spare dispatcher and a general trouble-shooter — maybe a trouble-maker.

Anyhow, down the line at a town called Georges, there was a dumb agent who worked part times at the station and drove a stage coach to Fairfax, several miles away, with passengers and mail. This guy slept in the dump there—a little bare room up above the station — and was only on duty a few minutes before 8 A.M. and a couple of hours in the evening after 4 P.M. He drove horses to his stage coach (this was back in 1907, when automobiles weren't in general bus service), and he was a half-cracked veterinarian along with it, which is the reason why I had my first run in with him.

I went down there one day, because of an extra heavy movement of some extra excursion trains, to keep his station open during the day. All I got out of my trouble was a lot of grief and a near fight with this bozo because I happened to upset a couple of bottles of horse liniment that he had sticking

around in the various cabinets in the office. In fact, I have been in a lot of telegraph offices in my twenty-two years, but I have never once found one that smelled so vile as that one did. I told this guy that if he didn't clean that station up and take his horse remedies somewhere else, I would turn him in. He thumbed his nose at me and I went on my way.

The summer grew on and I had sort of forgot the bozo at Georges when along came this balmy day of which I now write. The Northern States Limited was humming its way through the hills southward to the sea with the time card designation of No. 2. She had just cleared Albans, northern terminal of the division, and she held an order reading, "No. 2, Engine 212, meet No. 9, Engine 336, at Midville."

The reason I know it held that order is because I was the guy that put it out. No. 9 was the north-bound accommodation and was going along in its usual manner, so I sat back and was idly taking the reports of the various trains on the division. The summer sunlight sifted into the office through the drawn blinds and carried with it a sort of peaceful breath from hills and lakes. It was one swell day to fish, but no good much for work.

I put out at Chester the order to No. 9 to meet No. 2 at Midville. Chester was the stop just south of Midville and the last one the local would make before reaching the meeting point. At Midville, according to the rules at that time, No. 9 would enter the siding and meet the Limited. I looked down on the train sheet and saw that No. 2 was holding up fine, got the O. S. from Oakdale on time, and knew that pretty soon she would swing by Georges and batter down to Midville for her meet with No. 9.

Then something happened—the train wire sounder opened and:

"O. S. O. S.," reported Midville. "No. 9 arrived 9.17, departed 9.18 A.M."

Boy, I went right over the top of that telegraph table. I must have swallowed my chew—I don't remember. I know that I grabbed the key and almost jerked it out by the roots asking Midville if No. 9 didn't go to the north end of the siding and wait for No. 2.

"No," was the reply. "No. 9 was on the main line here and didn't stop at north end."

I looked at the order book and reread the order I had put out, and it plainly was a straight meet at Midville. I called Chester and asked him to repeat the order he had delivered to No. 9. This is what he said:

"No. 2, Engine 212, meet No. 9, Engine 336, at Georges."

By the great scaled Cod of Boston Bay!

I knew by all that was holy that my order was for the meet at Midville and not at Georges and that the operator had so repeated it. Calling Albans, I asked him to repeat the order he got, and he had the meet at Midville O K.

"Did you hear Chester repeat the order?" I asked Albans.

"I did. He repeated it as you sent it with the meet at Midville," said Albans.

Again calling the operator at Chester, I asked, "Did you recopy that order?"

"Yes, I did," was the reply, and then I knew that the greatest error in railroading had been committed. That operator had recopied and not repeated for check to me, and it had resulted in a lap order. The only chance by wire now to stop a collision would be to raise Georges, and how could any-

body do that with a dumb station agent out driving a stage line?

The switch where No. 9 would stop to enter the Georges siding was on a curve and was located at the north end of a high trestle spanning a three-hundred-foot gorge. Figuring on the time that the only chance was to try to raise somebody at Georges.

"G, G, G—DS," called the chief. I straightened up at the window and came back to lean over his shoulder. It seemed like a couple of years those next two seconds, and I knew that all

SUDDENLY THE TRAIN WIRE BROKE AND OUT OF THE SKY CAME GEORGES ANSWERING

No. 2 was making, she would pass Georges about the time No. 9 slowed to get the gate, and a collision there would precipitate both trains into that awful abyss.

While I was going through seven hundred brands of agony the chief dispatcher and the supe had not been idle. They had ordered a relief train with doctors and nurses, and they ordered the big hook. The strain was a little too much for me about that time as I visualized the possibility of three hundred lives lost, so I staggered to the window for air while Chief Dormer took the key. The chief decided up and down that train wire every operator on the pike was staring at his brass which was carrying the news of tragedy.

The super had beat it out and had climbed the first relief train, which already had its orders. A second train was being thrown together, and following the second would come the big hook.

"G, G, G—DS," Dormer pounded, and I thought his wrist would snap. Suddenly the train wire broke, and out of the sky came Georges answering:

"I, I, G."

"Stop No. 2!"

That's about all the chief could muster strength enough to make that key spit, and then, after what seemed an eternity, the train wire opened and Georges answered, "O K."

My back and chest were dripping with perspiration, and I saw that the chief's collar was pretty well wilted down on his fat neck. My heart quit cutting up like an air drill, and I sat back down in my chair long enough to listen to this:

"No. 2 here. No. 9 stopped and now pulling in to clear."

There wasn't going to be any main line meet after all. The chief reached over my shoulder and spat a terse order to Oakdale to stop the relief train and turn him back. Orders for the wrecker and the other relief train were annulled. It was ten minutes later, after the chief had gone across the street to get a cup of coffee and chat with the Harvey girl, that I took the key and asked a pointed question of the hack-driving agent down in the stinking station in Georges.

"How in the name of high heaven did you happen to be around to get that call?" I asked on the wire.

"Well, you see," the agent pecked back at me, "when I was getting ready to leave this morning with my hack, one of the horses looked like he was sick, and I had only gone a short way when I had to turn him back to doctor him up. I was just getting out some horse medicine from the cabinet where I keep the train order blanks, when I heard you calling me."

I didn't have any answer to that. The chief dispatcher said it was an act of Providence when I told him about it later.

"No," I said, "horse medicine."

The Unwelcome Fireman

This Hogger Had to Hotfoot It for Help When a Giant Python Took the Left Side

By Walt. R. Bethel

THE early days on the construction of the great Isthmian Canal, in Panama, were fraught with plenty of high excitement, thrills, and sure-fire cures for the dreaded *ongwee* that attacked the French canal builders under the renowned engineer, De Lesseps, and caused them to leave the completion of that great water link to the army of "boomer" adventurers who began flocking there early in 1905.

When I shipped out to Cristobal, Colon, as a locomotive engineer, presumptive, it was a great experience; one of life's earliest and greatest thrills. After I had landed there, and been assigned to the Culebra cut, pulling a dirt train out of Las Cascadas, it was one continual round of thrills.

First, there came the singing, probing mosquitoes, with the pleasant uncertainty that attended them, as to whether they were carriers of the deadly yellow jack or merely malaria.

Then, bevies of friendly, playful

scorpions that went to sleep in our shoes, and that, upon being rudely awakened by a foot carelessly placed upon them, showed their resentment by jabbing hot-pointed, stinging tails into unsuspecting great toes.

And, lest we forget, the giant, romping cockroaches that galloped frenziedly across the bare floors of our sleeping quarters at night, ate the rubber out of our garters and suspenders, then topped off their meals by nibbling off our superfluous toenails.

Equally pleasant, and omnipresent, were hordes of flat-bellied bedbugs that had weathered the lean years between the French exodus and our arrival; and they ran exciting races over our bare, sweating bodies at night, while we fought for enough rest to recuperate from the hot, gruelling work of our days in the cut.

I was only a youth at the time—sailing under false colors, too—using a faked service letter that I bought from an employment agent, who was getting rich from setting extra board firemen up as full-fledged engineers, brakies as conductors, *et cetera,* and supplying them with the credentials that got them their jobs. And the agents employed by the Canal Commission, desperately scouting the country for men, did not look too long, neither too well, at our references.

I had been firing on the L. & N. for about two years at the time I signed up for the canal job, and had a more or less general idea of what it was all about when I was assigned one of those old relics of saddle type Belgian engines that had been left scattered along the canal right of way by the French. These mills were all fit candidates for the back shops before we took them over to try to run them; and the ones that were usable we soon reduced to a condition that fitted them for a junk yard.

Our cars, like the engines, were all of the old link and pin type of couplers; and many were the fingers, hands, and arms that we ground off of switchmen and brakemen—many of whom, like myself, were running with false markers. Occasionally, when the going was extra good, we managed to behead, or to cut in two, a too trusting Jamaican negro switchman who gave us a full arm, " back-up " signal and then sauntered unconcernedly in between the cars, out of sight, and left the rest to our judgment—and to the mercy of the God who sometimes failed to protect him in his dumb ignorance.

But these are only sidelights that recall themselves to my memory of a hectic three years spent on the canal, from 1905 to 1908. The real story, with the greatest thrill that I recall, comes at a time when I had been running my old Belgian curio, with her steam-jam brakes, for about six months.

We had no roundhouse at Las Cascadas, as yet, and left all our engines standing at night on a spur track that ended in a bumping post at the very edge of the almost impenetrable jungle. There our negro firemen would shake down their fires at night, and on the next morning would fire up, usually, and have our engines ready for us when we went down to work.

On the particular morning that concerns my story, my black fireboy had got steam up on the leaky old kettle and had then gone back to his house for something. The engine had been standing, untended, for possibly a half hour when I arrived and clambered up into her narrow gangway. It was a bare foot between the edge of the cab and the tender; no job for some of the fat " hogheads " I have seen.

I had been first in the night before, and my engine was standing with her footboard almost against the bumping post. Ten feet away, ahead of her, was the steaming, mysterious jungle. But I had no thought for the jungle and its mysteries then. Before me was the certainty of nine hours of drilling, torturing labor, wrestling that man-killing complicated screw-jack reverse mechanism back and forth, while I backed up and went ahead, hundreds of times, in answer to the indolent swing of a negro switchman's signalling hand.

I was filling the lubricator—we could never trust our negro firemen to do it for us—when I heard something moving on the fireman's side of the cab. Thinking it was my fireman, possibly taking his hay there instead of in his house, I called out to him, and, I suppose, cussed him out, which was the usual procedure in starting each day off properly.

But I received no answer. So I completed my job, screwed the filling plug down tight, and replaced the tallowpot in the small locker under my seatbox. Then I turned resolutely across the deck to attend to that supposedly sleeping fireman of mine.

I leaned over to peer around the end of the boiler. At the same time I barked another exasperated command to the fireman to shake a leg and snap out of his dream. There was another rustling, thumping sound, a tremendous rattling of empty cans, and the fireman's broom came tumbling over toward me. Then came my thrill!

THE SNAKE REARED UP OVER THE FIREMAN'S SEATBOX

Instead of the sleepy-headed, lazy fireman that I expected to see arise, with his black face beaming like a piece of shiny ebony, well greased, and his cheerful, "yas, sah, boss; yas, sah!" I saw the slimy green head, darting tongue, and beady eyes of a monster python that was lying coiled down beside the jacket.

The snake reared up over the fire-

man's seatbox until its head was on a level with mine. The head swayed back and forth two or three times, while I stood paralyzed with sudden fright and the astonishment of confronting the reptile on my engine.

I do not know how long the strange tableau lasted—not long enough, however, for my hair to turn gray, or the little mind I had to depart from me. But it seemed hours to me that my brave feet stood there in front of that cussed, fearsome snake, while my cowardly head was urging the rest of my willing body to depart from that vicinity as speedily as possible.

Finally my head had its way, and my feet obeyed. My first leap landed me well up on the coal pile, as nearly as I can recall, and my next wild jump cleared the back of the tender by a good safe margin. I stumbled as I landed, but I was running before I was well straightened up. I did not hold the pace that I started off with. I bettered it. I got faster and faster with each succeeding stride that carried me away from the vicinity of that python. And, while I ran, my voice came back to me, too. I yelled, time after time: "Snake! *Snake!* SNAKE!"

My race soon became a procession, as ten or a dozen other engineers and firemen took in after me, to ascertain just what kind of delirium tremens had taken hold of me. Some one finally halted me long enough to get me to explain about the snake. Then some other brave spirit volunteered to lead the way back to battle, and I grudgingly agreed to bring up the rear guard.

His snakeship was just leisurely crawling down out of my cab, swaying and undulating gracefully, I suppose some of the snake charmers would say. Within a minute the air all about that little Belgian cracker-box was full of flying missiles. Some one—my fireman, I think—used a coal pick tellingly, and the python's earthly career was ended.

I heard them telling about it afterward, in the "Y," and some one said that the snake measured something over thirteen feet. But I can not verify that, because I never allowed myself to get as close as thirteen feet to the snake, after that age-long minute while I stood with my face less than three feet away from its head and gazed, wild-eyed, at that black, darting tongue and those colorless, beady eyes.

LIGHT RAYS AUTOMATICALLY CONTROL TRAIN SPEED

A NEW type of train-control system has been devised by an engineer of Munich, Germany, whereby a selenium cell acted upon by light rays emanating from the locomotive cab is utilized to control the speed of the train.

In operation, the light successively strikes a group of mirrors placed along the roadway. If there is danger ahead and the approaching section or block is closed, the rays are transmitted to the selenium cell, which is thus made to close an electric circuit that automatically operates the brakes. The mirrors are of special construction, and are said to be absolutely reliable under all weather conditions.

The arrangement is such that the train is brought to a stop gradually. This is accomplished by varying the distance between the mirrors so that the speed of the oncoming train is first reduced to about 37 miles, then to 25 miles, 12 miles, and so on until it comes to a halt as the last of the four mirrors is left behind.

It has been recommended that the system be used to cut down automatically the speed of trains at dangerous curves, in order to lessen the chance of derailment.

THE MARCH CONSIST

Charles W. Tyler

Whose powerful pen long has been noted for its ability to catch the great, pulsing drama of the rails, returns to this magazine with

God of High Iron

A gripping complete novelette of outlawry and death on a moon-washed desert division.

A Railroad Romeo

James W. Earp, who wrote those memorable Boomer Jones tales, is back with a splendid new series.

Sahara Highball

Ralph Heinzen, who's been all over and seen everything, tells how they rawhide 'em on the great white sands of Africa.

And in addition to many other fine fiction and feature stories, there will be an important announcement on the return of Emmet F. Harte's

Honk and Horace

By the Light of the Lantern

WE want to be as useful as possible to our readers, but, because of the great popularity of this department, we are obliged to impose certain restrictions. It is limited to the answering of questions of an informative, technical, or historical nature only. Letters concerning positions WILL NOT be answered. All letters should be signed with the full name of the writer, as an indication of his good faith. We will print only his initials. The editor begs that readers sending in questions will not be disappointed if the answers do not appear as early as expected. Delays are often unavoidable for two reasons: the magazine is printed two months in advance of the date of issue, and it frequently takes weeks to secure correct answers, owing to the complexity of the questions.

R. L.—It is absolutely necessary for the engineer and the conductor of any train whatsoever, regardless of class or direction, to compare watches at the designated standard clock before starting each day's work. A clock is designated as standard by the division officials and in the event a crew is tied up for rest and later starts from a station where there is no standard clock, the watch comparison must be made from time obtained by telegraph or telephone from the superintendent.

F. I. M.—Mr. B. R. Moore is Superintendent of Motive Power on the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad, and his office is located at Two Harbors, Minn. He can give you the information you seek. The road operates 92 locomotives over its 272 miles of track.

E. P. N.—There is no such thing as right by time card in speaking of the superiority of trains. Rights are conferred on a train only by train order. The time card gives a train superiority by class and by direction.

GOING from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Omaha, Nebraska (via Michigan Central to Chicago), what road would I get out of Chicago to avoid changing stations?

(b) I understand there are poor connections by train from Cleveland to Steubenville, Ohio. Could better travel be had by going to Amsterdam on train, thence by bus?

(c) What is the advantage claimed for the air whistles used on Chicago Great Western passenger trains?

(a) Illinois Central.

(b) The only logical route to take from Cleveland to Steubenville by rail is the Pennsylvania Lines, and, as you say, it is rather difficult to make good connections. There is a train, however, that leaves Cleveland at 8 o'clock in the morning, connects at Wellsville, and arrives at Steubenville at 12.24 in the afternoon. The afternoon train leaves Cleveland at 2.40 P.M. and arrives at Steubenville at 7.21. There would be no advantage in traveling from Cleveland to Amsterdam whatever, as the latter city is on a small branch line of the New York Central without even a Cleveland connection.

(c) We assume that you mean the sirens on the locomotives which are in use now on quite a number of railroads. The only advantage might lie in the fact that they are louder and clearer than steam whistles and can be heard at a greater distance.

PLEASE tell me where I can get a copy of the book called "The Locomotive Catechism," written by a man named Grimshaw, also whether this will give me some pretty good dope on examination questions and answers.—S. P. A.

This book is published by the Norman W. Henley Publishing Company, 2 West 45th

Street, New York, along with a line of various railroad works. You may write to the publishers for price and other information. The book contains many complete questions and answers on locomotive operation and repairs of breakdowns, and undoubtedly would be helpful in an examination.

WHAT is the fastest speed of a railroad train?

(b) What is the fastest train on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, and what is its average speed, and over what division does it operate?—William E. Janurin.

(a) In modern train service the fastest runs are made at a mile a minute pace by the Pennsylvania Lines on the Camden-Atlantic City express trains. Next to that comes the 58 mile per hour average of the Wolverine on the New York Central-Michigan Central as it speeds from Bridgeburg, outside of Buffalo, to Windsor, on the east side of the river from Detroit, a distance of 228 miles in 236 minutes.

(b) Those operating on a schedule of 1 hour 45 minutes between Chicago, Illinois, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a distance of 85 miles, on the Wisconsin Division. The average speed of these trains, of which there are five, is 49.54 miles per hour.

WOULD you please give us an illustration and a description of the Atlantic type locomotives in use on the Missouri Pacific Railroad? I have heard that, though not the latest in power, they are beautiful machines.—W. H. H.

We are reproducing herewith a mechanical drawing made from a blueprint of this engine in lieu of a photograph which could not be furnished by the mechanical officer's department. As for the engines themselves, the series is numbered 5501 to 5540 inclusive. Some are equipped with Walschaert's valve gear and some with the Baker. Some of them have power reverse gear and some have not, and some are equipped with boosters and some are not.

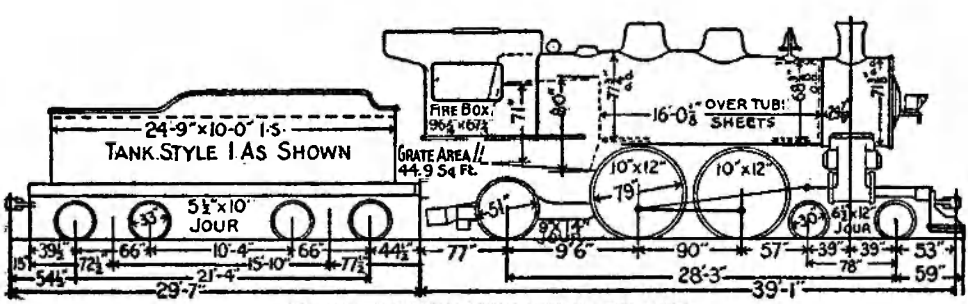
The general specifications of the illustrated engine are:

Engine number: 5507.
Size of cylinders: 21 inches by 26 inches.
Size of valves: 11-inch diameter.
Valve gear: Walschaert.
Booster: Yes.
Power reverse gear: Yes.
Diameter of drivers: 79 inches.
Loaded weights, pounds: Drivers, 125,700; trailer, 44,200; engine truck, 42,100; total engine, 212,000.
Light weight engine pounds: 194,500.
Heating surface, square feet: Fire box, 187; tubes, 1683; flues, 627; arch tubes, 21; total, 2,518.
Ratio of adhesion: 5.1.
Steam pressure: 200 pounds.
Tractive power: Without booster, 24,670; with booster, 34,370.
Fuel: Oil.

CAN you tell me approximately when electric locomotives will supplant steam, for instance, on the Pennsylvania Railroad or New York Central Railroad?—E. M.

The Pennsylvania Railroad is now making preparations to electrify its lines west from New York to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to Washington. The last obstacle in the Baltimore City Council recently was overcome and work is already going forward on this program. No definite announcement as yet can be had on the approximate date of completion. The New York Central electrification at this time is not being extended up its main line, nor is there any indication as to when such a program might be undertaken. The age of steam, however, does not seem at this time in any way threatened.

E. P.—The American Railway Association can supply you with this information. The signals are rather extensive where they include all branches of train operation, and space here prohibits setting them all forth.



MO. PAC. ATLANTIC TYPE ENGINE NO. 5507

Application to the office of the general superintendent of one of the main trunk lines entering your city, might also bring you the desired information.

IS it necessary to take down the main rods with a broken main pin?—G. M.

With a broken main crank pin the removal of all the side rods on each side is necessary, and the main rod on the disordered side should be taken down unless the main rod runs through the guide yoke. If so, it can be carried resting on the guide yoke or the bottom guide with the piston moved ahead and the crosshead blocked.

WHICH engine will haul the heavier train: a 3500 class engine on the Canadian National or a 5300 type engine on the Canadian Pacific Railway?—G. R. H.

The 3500 class engine on the Canadian National, equipped with 27x30 cylinders, 63-inch drivewheels and carrying 185 pounds pressure, has 54,600 pounds tractive effort without the booster. The booster gives an additional starting power of 10,700 pounds, or a total of 65,300 pounds tractive effort.

The Canadian Pacific engine 5355, which is in the type you mention, has cylinders 25½x32, drivewheels of 63-inch diameter and carries 200 pounds pressure. This engine's maximum tractive effort is 56,200 pounds. You will see, therefore, that the Canadian Pacific engine is a little stronger in its pulling power than the Canadian National engine, provided the booster is not used, but the use of the booster on the Canadian National locomotive gives that engine a little better pulling power. All the way round, however, these two engines are practically alike so far as road performance is concerned.

WHAT is the American type locomotive?—P. C. T.

This type of engine is equipped with a four-wheel engine truck and four connected driving wheels, two on each side. It is classed 4-4-0, and was very popular in passenger and freight service many years ago. This type of engine may be seen to-day only on plug runs, suburban trains and branch lines where there is neither grade nor tonnage to worry about.

WHAT are the particular advantages of the articulate compound locomotive aside from the advantage of the wheel arrangement?—J. H. F.

In addition to the wheel arrangement advantages, this type of engine possesses the great advantage resulting from compounding all steam. The compounding feature of this type engine is what is known as two stage, that is, two sets of cylinders successively use the steam. In most cases the high pressure cylinders are hooked to the rear controls and the low pressure cylinders are attached to the front. The high pressure cylinders usually receive steam through external and rigid pipes from the boiler. Steam from the boiler is admitted to the first set or high pressure cylinders which ordinarily drive the rear group of wheels and then the steam goes to the second set or low pressure cylinders which are connected with the front wheels. The steam then is exhausted to the atmosphere.

WHAT is the proper form of train order to authorize running of two sections of a train from A to Z?—F. F.

The simplest form would be to the engineman and conductor of the two engines called for the two sections of the schedule. The train order would read like this: "Engine 3437 will display signals and run as first No. 31 from A to Z and engine 3439 will run as second No. 31 from A to Z." It is possible, however, that the order would be split up. For instance, the first engine would have an order authorizing *him* to run as first No. 31 from A to Z and another order would be issued to the second engine to run as second No. 31. In no case would a single order issued to the first engine authorize the second engine to run as second No. 31 until the required order was issued covering such procedure.

A. Q. B.—A full and complete answer to your questions will be found in the article in this issue of the magazine called "Making the Trains Behave," by Charles F. Carter. Detailed data may be had from any of the signal companies which manufacture train control equipment.

WHAT is the difference between a "19" and a "31" train order?—W. W. B.

The original intention of the "31" form was to restrict the rights or superiority of the train to which it was issued, while the "19" order could be issued to govern the movements of any train where there was little or no restriction. With the passing of time, however, there have been considerable changes made in the use of these two forms and their use varies now on different roads. The "19" form is handed on while the train is in motion, while the "31" must be signed for by either the engineer or conductor, or both, according to the local rules in effect.

Making the Grade

By the Promotion Pilot

NEVER before has railroading offered such vast opportunities for young men and women in every branch of the service. Believing firmly that we can be helpful in solving many of the problems which confront workers in their battle for promotion, we are devoting this department to helping those men and women who want to help themselves. You are invited to present your problem. No names will be used, and your correspondence will be treated with the strictest confidence. A stamped envelope for reply will bring you advice.

THE other day the conductor of this department had the opportunity to discuss advancement and the chances for promotion in railroading with a general superintendent on an eastern main line.

"Do not let any one tell you that a man in the railroad game has no chance of getting ahead to-day," said the superintendent. "One of my greatest problems is to find a man who really uses his brains. The trouble this day and age with the men in the rank and file, as I view it, is that they are not conscious of the fact that they have never trained themselves to think. There are men right here under my jurisdiction whom I would be delighted to promote to trainmaster and assistant superintendent. They are good, honest workmen who know railroading from hard rock contact, but they have never lifted a finger to improve their mental capacities beyond the ability to figure meets, tonnage and drawbar pull. I believe the railroad executive of to-day is more keenly alert than ever before to find young men, either in train, engine or telegraph service, who really are ambitious and want to get along—young men who will do everything within their power to improve themselves mentally, both on the job and off."

We are honor-bound to withhold the name of this official. Since our conversation with him we have talked to a half dozen other brass collars and the sentiment has been pretty much the same. We have now the beginning of what we hope you will call a great department.

* * *

I AM thirty-five years of age, a telegraph operator working third trick for a railroad. I have fourteen years of railroad experience as follows: six months hostling, one year in the repair shops, two years as an assistant freight agent, six months in the freight handling and mail and express work, and nine years in telegraphy. In these fourteen years I have worked for three railroads. I worked four years as a shipping clerk for

an engine and boiler works, took a correspondence course and received a diploma in traffic management. I have one year of high school to back up this education. I dearly love the railroad, but I do not have the desire to live and die an operator. I am not afraid to study or of hard work, if there is a reward for it. I am without relatives, and I am not sure that the superintendent or the general manager of this road would know my name if either heard it, or even know where my office is located. I have a good, clean record; I am well thought of by the chief train dispatcher and by the men on the road with whom I come in contact.

H. M. L.,
Erie, Pa.

You have indeed quite a bit of background that should enable you to make rapid advancement in railroading. Being in the telegraph department, there is the possibility of being raised to a train dispatcher and thence to trainmaster and on up through the division superintendency to higher things, provided, however, the road you are employed by has not adopted the practice of promoting no more train dispatchers to trainmaster.

Since your chief is pleased with you, it would not be out of the way to cultivate him, make him extremely conscious of your presence wherever possible without being obtrusive or without appearing to be pushing yourself unduly. Watch closely for opportunities to suggest ideas on economy, safety or train movements.

Many men fail of promotion because they have never learned to think. Many men watch opportunity pass by day by day when, if they had trained themselves to think, they would have been awake to conditions around them which, with some application of thought, could be bettered either for the benefit of the men or in the name of safety or savings.

Your position undoubtedly brings you very close to the traveling and shipping public. Almost every day perhaps you come in contact with people who buy service from your railroad. You have in that contact another splendid chance to show yourself a step ahead of the herd. Remember always that you are a public relations representative for your railroad, and you never can tell how far a pleasant word, a smile, a little extra effort to please a shipper or a traveler will go toward helping you along.

There is, of course, an old, old saying that the man who does his job a little better than he is supposed to do it, is the man who gets ahead. The truth of this cannot be disputed. In your post as a telegraph operator you have a good deal of time on your hands to devote to good straight thinking, not only about yourself and your job, but about the things that you want to accomplish. Go to it, old man, blow your horn wherever you can without knocking the drums out of the chief dispatcher's ears, but make them know you are around through worthwhile suggestions and activities. They won't miss an opportunity to push you ahead.

* * *

I AM very desirous of getting a position in the accounting department of some railroad, but up to this writing I have not met with any success, even though I have tried quite a few times. I would appreciate it if you would advise me just what procedure to take to get in touch with the proper authorities regarding an accounting position. I am thirty-five years old, married, and have had fifteen years of accounting experience.

L. A. M.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

The best procedure in your case possibly would be to learn the names of the chief clerks in the auditing or accounting departments of the railroads you would prefer to associate with, and then attempt either to see them by a personal call or to reach them by mail. A well written letter setting forth the things that you want to accomplish and some brief data concern-

ing your experience, often will gain quick admission to the inner sanctum. Once you are established with a railroad your progress, of course, will depend upon your own initiative and your own ability.

As you probably know, there are many branches of accounting in railroading, and it might be best for you to determine in advance which one of these departments would appeal to you, that is, whether you would prefer the auditor of freight receipts, or the auditor of passenger receipts, or the superintendent of car records for your affiliations. Under any circumstances, get your message to the men you want to reach.

* * *

I AM a brakeman. I was employed February 27, 1924, and I have worked off and on since that time. Right now I am furloughed and I am selling life insurance. The division on which I work is loaded with older men than myself, and it looks like it will be quite some time before I can hold a turn the year round, as business rises and falls with the coal operations. The road is now expanding, putting larger engines on all turns. This, of course, means that they will move more cars with fewer crews. I have not yet been called to pass promotion to conductor. I know I am able to handle the work, but the chance has not come. I am secretary-treasurer of my local brotherhood organization, and it does look to me that promotion for the brakeman is coming mighty slow. I am not discouraged, but I certainly would like to have some advice as to how to get promoted. I do not mean only to a conductor, but on up the line. Before I went on the railroad I was a coal mine superintendent, and I feel that I have some executive ability.

I am thirty-one years of age, married, and own my property.

D. O. E.,
Clarksburg, W. Va.

You are facing exactly the same proposition that thousands of other trainmen all over the country are confronted with. The use of bigger power, the moving of more cars with fewer crews, is something that will adjust itself before very much longer. The great increase in tonnage over even ten years ago shows that already a balance is being struck in that, while one engine will move more cars, there is enough tonnage to be hauled so that on many railroads there are as many or more crews working to-day than in those days when lighter power pulled fewer tons.

The best thing, as long as you want to stay in train service, is to sit tight and keep on your toes in watching for the first break that can come your way. In due course you will be set up. That fact is governed by your seniority. Your opportunity now is to do what you can to prepare yourself in advance so that the moment a channel opens up for you which looks good for promotion, you are prepared. You don't have to sit back and watch some other man run around you. So far as we know, there is no set law or rule on any railroad that says a trainman cannot be moved up to trainmaster, assistant superintendent and superintendent. Officials are keenly alert to find young men who have the ambition and other qualifications to fill such jobs.

Has it ever occurred to you to go in, and sit down, and talk man-to-man across the table with your division superintendent? Ninety-nine to one you will find him a very affable human being, who will talk to you straight from the shoulder and tell you what your chances are. Go up and see him some time. He will appreciate it more than you will ever know.

* * *

H. W. K., Hoboken—It is not possible for this department, nor is it a part of its functions, to attempt to place men in railroad positions. If you desire to find work in the roundhouse you mention in your letter, the proper procedure is to make application to the foreman.

On the Spot

Where Our Readers, Our Writers and the Editor Gather to Railroad to Their Hearts' Content

AND still they come!

It is hard to believe that such great tonnage could be whipped across one editorial desk in such a short space of time, but the letters you fellows have been shooting into this yard since the December issue appeared are something to write home about. Especially the letters from the boomers. If we had space to print them all they would make a priceless volume. We have been smothered with kindness. Only a few of the boys have taken exception to some of the things we have printed, and even they didn't object too strenuously; so, all in all, we have plenty of reason to latch her wide on the high iron that this New Year has given us, and we feel pretty certain that every one of you will hop onto each section and walk down the railroad with us.

Insistent cries still come forth for John C. Russell and his famous character Spike Malone of other days; Emmet F. Harte, with his Honk and Horace, and more of the offerings of Lydia M. Dunham O'Neil.

The appearance of Robert Fulkerson Hoffman in the January number was celebrated by no small group of readers. Mr. Hoffman is an old-timer who thoroughly knows his stuff, and just as soon as he gets over a bad cold he is going to give us some more mountain division stories.

What Do You Say?

Brain teasers were one time a popular feature of the old RAILROAD MAN'S, and a reader has sent along a problem here which he wishes to have discussed pro and con in this department. The situation is this:

Extra 767 East in the home terminal at A was about ready to leave the yards and re-

ceived a 31 order to the effect that engine 767 would run Extra A to M and meet Extra 714 West at B. Extra 767 East could not leave the terminal at A until the arrival of No. 11, a first-class train. No. 11 had just cleared and the switch tender was lining up the lead switches to let the 767 out to the main iron, when Extra 714 West showed up on the hill. The Extra 767 then waited until Extra 714 West came into the yards. The conductor of the Extra East then demanded new train orders from the dispatcher before he would proceed. The conductor on the Extra West maintained that the east-bound man could go without any different orders because he was superior by direction. The east-bound conductor brought up the question that he could go all right, but what would he do when he arrived at B—would he highball through or stop there for the meet?

Well, men, that is the question. There you are, and it is up to you to thresh it out. What is your opinion?

While we are starting arguments, here is a nice chance to keep up the good work. The following letter speaks for itself:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Your excellent magazine started an argument among a group of fellows who are former railroad men, but who now work at other occupations here in New York City. First we talked over the romance and adventure of railroading and then, as railroad men will, we got to arguing and shooting hot air for cold facts.

Here's what it was all about: one of the men asked: "Where is the busiest spot in the United States?" Meaning, of course, the busiest railroad center, junction point, *et cetera*. I said Chicago, because more lines come in there than any other place, and also because these lines carry more freight and passengers than any others.

One of the others was of a different opinion. He said Kansas City was a busier spot. Another contended that New York City ought to get the palm, but you know, Mr. Editor, that all but three of New York City's fistful of railroads end on the Jersey side of the Hudson.

Another chap brought up a peculiar sidelight, although I don't think it has a place in the main argument. He claimed that the heaviest tonnage center was near Pittsburgh, at the town of Braddock, Pennsylvania. Here the Pennsylvania Railroad's main line, the B. & O.'s main line, the Bessemer and Lake Erie, the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie (New York Central), the Pittsburgh, Virginia and Charleston (Pennsy), the Pittsburgh, McKeesport and Youghiogheny (New York Central), and the Union Railroad all come together. All of them are heavy carriers, mostly steel, iron, coal, coke, ore, *et cetera*, but I don't know whether this spot outweighs all that goes through Chicago.

Here's some other pointers that were brought up, Mr. Editor. One fellow said that the South Station in Boston is the busiest passenger station. Another claimed that the Pennsy Station in New York sends out the most long distance (100 miles or more) trains. Washington, it was pointed out, had the most railroads crowded into one station (including through Pullmans from other lines than those touching there).

We finally decided to put the argument up to you, Mr. Editor. Maybe some of your readers would know. Personally, I'll stick with Chicago until some one can prove that another place is the center of the railroad universe.

Best wishes and long life to the new RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE. May you highball it to the top of the magazine line.

WILLARD J. HEGGIN,
New York City.

Maybe the editor knows and maybe the editor doesn't know, but this department certainly would like to hear a few expressions on Mr. Heggin's letter.

Yes, Probably

From out in Monroe, Michigan, Mr. H. M. Fancher sends us the following clipping with the comment that it was sent to him about twenty years ago cut from a home paper. Anyhow, it is good for a laugh.

PROBABLY HIS SLEEP WAS DISTURBED
(From the P. M. Magazine)

A citizen of Dallas, Texas, who evidently lives near a railroad track, recently wrote an open letter to the officers of the road through the columns of the *Times-Herald*. He didn't sign his name to the letter and will therefore be forgotten, but the letter itself will become a part of the picturesque literature of the land, to wit:

"GENTLEMEN:

"Is it absolutely necessary, in the discharge of his duty day and night, that the engineer of your yard engine should make it ding and dong and fizz and spit and clang and bang and buzz and hiss and bellow and wail and pant and rant and yowl and howl and grate and grind and puff and bump and clink and clank and chug and moan and hoot and toot and crash and grunt and gasp and groan and whistle and wheeze and squawk and blow and jar and jerk and rasp and jingle and twang and clack and rumble and jangle and ring and clatter and yelp and croak and howl and hum and snarl and puff and growl and thump

and boom and clash and jolt and jostle and shake and screech and snort and snarl and slam and scrape and throb and crink and jangle and quiver and grumble and roar and rattle and yell and smoke and smell and shriek like hell?"

Earp Hits a Responsive Chord

Here is a man in Binghamton who speaks his mind on the magazine:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

It was with genuine pleasure that I learned some time ago that your magazine was to resume publication, and after indulging in the first issue was more than satisfied.

When I was a very young man, starting my railroad career, the RAILROAD MAN'S was mine and my mother took great pleasure in reading it, and I am glad to say she still will enjoy it.

I look forward to more of J. E. Smith and the return of Emmet F. Harte.

"The Passing of the Boomer," by Mr. Earp, touched a responsive chord in me. Plenty of that on the Susquehanna Division of the D. & H., where I work. The class of officials to-day compare much higher than their predecessors of twenty years ago.

Yours for a successful and profitable career,

W. E. T.,
Binghamton, N. Y.

And here is a real fan:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

I was certainly glad to see the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE revived again, after a decade of silence.

It carries the same good old stories that I used to read some fifteen to twenty years ago. J. E. Smith, in "Observations of a Country Station Agent," is very natural. "Passing of the Boomer," by James W. Earp, tells us of the good old days. "Lost—One Locomotive," is an interesting story.

I have a complete file of the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, from 1908 to 1919, kept in boxes at my country home, about twenty-five miles out. Each time I go there I always look over some of the different issues.

I wish you a continuous run.

B. M. M.,
Shreveport, La.

This lad votes for one serial:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Congratulations! I enjoyed your first issue very much, and as you ask for criticism, here's some.

Please continue the policy of having one serial at a time, except, of course, when one runs out. Cut down on the features and let's have more short stories with at least one novelette. I liked all the short stories, so I won't discriminate by making a choice as to the best.

E. F. H.,
New York City, N. Y.

Thank you, Doc, for those kind words:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

A far cry from "Railroad" to medicine, but that's me. Oh! so long ago; yes, started in the ash-pit at the roundhouse, and in between the heavier items constituting higher education, *et cetera*. Never did I enjoy as delightful and thrilling tales as appeared regularly in the issues of the old RAILROAD MAN'S.

The December issue is the first I have seen of the present rejuvenated magazine, but may I offer my congratulations, with wishes for an everlasting and permanent success? *It's great!*

DR. L. J. G.,
Manassa, Colo.

The Boomers' Corner

In the December number of this magazine our beloved friend and compatriot, Mr. James W. Earp, said that the boomer was just about a thing of the past. Mr. Earp is practically correct. There are still left on this globe, however, plenty of the rolling sons, although their numbers may be few compared to fifteen years and more ago.

The editor broadcast a plea for the whereabouts of one Jack Gilligan in the December issue and, among others, the following letter was forthcoming:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Sure glad to see RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE back again. Just like meeting an ole pal you made some rush with. You wanted to know where Jack Gilligan is. Well, this time of the year he should be near San Bardo (San Bernardino), on the Santa Fe. He made the fall rush on the Short Line at Nampa, Idaho. Last year he made the grape rush at the Needles on John's R. R.

The last time we worked together was on the T. & T. at Ludlow, California. I swiped a ham from him at Death Valley Junction. Speaking of boomers, I think that my own record is way up on the list. Have worked for Santa Fe 21 times; S. P. 6; Western Pacific 8; T. & T. 10; D. V. R. R. 4; Trona Ry. 1; M. O. P. 5; D. R. G. 7; O. S. L. 1; U. P. 2; C. B. Q. 2; C. M. St. P. 5; N. P. 1; G. N. 2; S. P. S. 1; Inland Empire 1; Frisco 2; Cotton Belt 1; Gulf Coast Line 1; Texas Pacific 2; Mexican Central 2; Pan American 1; Vera Cruz al Ismo 1; Mexican

Pac. 1; Ludlow Southern 1; Bull Frog Goldfield 1; Gallitan Valley 1; Rock Island 3; E. P. S. W. 2; Tooele Valley 1; S. L. U. 1; Clover Valley 1; Utah Ry. 3; Yosemite Valley 1; Northwestern Pacific 1; Sacramento Nor. 1; S. A. A. P. 1 (now S. P.); G. H. S. A. 1. Also S. P. and a few more that I have forgotten.

I have worked in Montana when it was so cold your light would freeze up. Been so hot at the Needles that the only way to get your rest would be to get in the ice bunks when on the road. Have been chased by monkeys on the Vera Cruz al Ismo—near Sierra Blanca, Vera Cruz. I have worked in almost all capacities—brakeman, switchman, fireman, gandy dancer, engineer, conductor, yard clerk, call boy, and a few more jobs. Am thirty-seven years old and have always used my own name. Made the grape rush on the W. P. at Elko this year. The best rush on the S. L. U. Hauled a few trains of coal on the Utah Ry. at Provo; also helped handle the cotton on the Cotton Belt Railway at Commerce, Texas. Tried to make the cane at Addis, but got there too late. Hired out to United Fruit Company at New Orleans for a job in Cuba, but did not go. I am on the spot at present until the cabbage starts in Texas. I can verify all of my service as bona fide. No phony dope for me. Adios.

DENNIS SLOAN,
Mina, Nevada.

Dennis, it will be pretty hard to tie your record anywhere we go. How about it, rails? Have any of you boomers worked on more railroads than Dennis has? You can't just say "yes," you know; you have to prove it. Dennis is able to stand up on his hind legs and account for every single day he has been employed.

From out in Des Moines we get word from an old pal, C. W. Deaton, now employed as a switchman on the Des Moines Union Railway. Just so some of you brothers might be able to place Mr. Deaton, we reproduce herewith the following newspaper clipping of nineteen years ago:

Railroad Brakeman Tells Story of Wild Ride on Runaway Car

After eleven years the story of a remarkable act of heroism, on the part of C. W. Deaton, 1300 Locust Street, a Rock Island brakeman, has come to light.

On December 23, 1899, Deaton caught and boarded a runaway coal car near Evans, Iowa; stopped it just in time to keep from crashing into a train coming from the opposite direction. Deaton never could be induced to talk of the matter until a few days ago, when he told the story to a *News* reporter.

"I was braking for the Rock Island," he said. "On the morning of December 23 we were ordered out with an extra for the West. It was one of the coldest days of the year. A driving snowstorm that fairly blinded us had been raging, and the wind cut our faces in its fierceness. At Evans we got orders to go to a coal mine about a mile west. The track there was at the top of a steep hill. Three coal cars had got beyond control there and struck a derailer. We pulled one of the cars out onto the track and prepared to take it to the main line.

"While we stopped for the switch to be closed the drawbar of the car came out and the coal car started down the big hill. I was down the track a little way and saw the car coming. It hadn't gained much speed, and I tried to stop it by throwing boards and ties under the wheels. Then I thought of No. 97 that was due on the main line about that time. I caught the car and succeeded in getting up to the brake wheel. The car was gaining speed all the time, and I suppose we were traveling seventy miles an hour down that hill. I expected every second that the car would jump the track.

"Just as we reached the main line I heard a whistle. I closed my eyes, expecting that the next instant would be the end. The car shot past the little town of Evans and down the main line. All the time I was tugging at the brake wheel. Then, looming up in the darkness, I saw a great engine. I was sure then that the jig was up and that I was on my way to glory. A second later we flew past the engine. It was a local and on a side track. Shortly afterward I got the car stopped.

"Not long afterward No. 97 came along, but we flagged her, and there wasn't anybody hurt."

The Poets' Corner

Bill Shindle, a boomer on the D. L. & W., writes in to say that he is fairly well satisfied with the magazine and that railroading runs in his family:

When I started in, the wreck of the 97 was an old, old song, but what my dad drummed into me was this, and I hope you publish it. I don't know where it came from:

Into a ward of white-washed halls the word came back to-day,
When I entered a building of plain white walls, where a friend who was wounded lay;
Yesterday working, a smile on his lips—to-day a cripple for life.
He kicked at a drawbar, it caught his hips, that's the story they told his wife.

"Take your time," says the book. "Hurry up," says the boss; "what caused all this delay?
"You fellows are building a manifest and it leaves some time to-day.
"You think you're a switchman—for the love of Mike, what railroad turned you out?
"You're getting your money on false pretense and act like you had the gout."
I wish all the snakes the country over could see what I saw to-day,
And have it made terribly plain to them that chance-taking doesn't pay.
Hell of it is, we don't seem to care till a drawbar smashes our lids,
And then a long trip, a one way fare, and the Lord take care of the kids.

There is a little bit of a laugh in the way that Bill winds up his letter. He says:

I will get the next book and see how you are making out. Now show us your brains were not burned out when you handled the banjo. Best of luck, old boy.

The following two poems are reproduced by special request of the readers. "The Rapper" is printed by permission of the *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers Journal.* "The Final Run" is reprinted from the old RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE by popular request. The editor will be glad to dig up any verse you desire.

"THE RAPPER"

By F. J. Kessler, Lodge 657, Enderlin, N. D.

(Fireman, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway)

Once upon a midnight dreary,
On the seatbox, worn and weary,
Napping, napping while she drifted, dreaming of the days of yore,
Suddenly there came a tapping as of some one fiercely rapping;
'Twas a rapping most ferocious just inside the firebox door;
"'Tis the engineer," I mumbled, as toward the scoop I stumbled,
"Only this and nothing more."

Now this engineer in question oft had made this harsh suggestion:
"Every 2-4-2's digestion is accelerated more
By a 'Rapper' at the lever," and had oft declared that never
Had a name more terse and clever been conceived in railroad lore,
And that he for one forever such a title would adore.
Thus I called him evermore.
'Twas a night in bleak November, ah, how well do I remember
How each sep'rate leaping ember just inside that firebox door
Greeted my despondent gazes as I tried to feed the blazes.
Far was I from singing praises as she beckoned me for more;
From that rare and radiant surface that I'd often fed before,
Craving diamonds evermore.

Looking at the man beside me, my despairing glance betrayed me
When the engineer espied me, counting notches left in store
On that quadrant growing fewer, as I heaved the carbon to her,
While the sky above grew bluer from the smoke that drifted o'er,
And the oozing perspiration issued out from every pore—
Perspiration evermore.

Then it seemed my soul grew stronger;
I could bear suspense no longer,
And I said, "Thou lever demon, my poor soul is sick and sore."
"Heartless sir," said I, entreating, "kindly discontinue beating,
Since the coal that she is eating sinks my spirits to the floor.
Are there any higher notches? tell me, tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Rapper, "Nevermore."

"Wretch," said I, "thou thing of evil, imp of Satan born of devil,
When at last thou reach the level, canst thou hook her up some more?
Tell this soul bent down with trouble, that you'll ease her off and double
E'er you burst life's fleeting bubble, and to realms above I soar.
Take the agony," I pleaded, "from this ignominious chore."
Quoth the Rapper, "Give her more."

Then in throes of desperation born of righteous indignation
I increased the conflagration while each scoopful spelled encore.
"Engineer," said I, imploring, "don't you hear that smokestack roaring?
See those rising rockets soaring, see and listen, I implore.
For behold this greedy monster gobbles up the coal galore."
Quoth the Rapper, "Give her more."

Startled at his silence broken, by replies so curtly spoken,
Which I took to be a token that relief might be in store,

I then sprang that kind of jokers, namely,
automatic stokers,
That dispensed with rakes and pokers. "Tell
me, sir," said I once more,
"Will we ever have these stokers?" as I oft
had asked before.
Quoth the Rapper, "Nevermore."

THE FINAL RUN
By George Wildey

I'm glad, old friend, you've come at last
To sit with me awhile;
And to let no thought of sadness cast
Its shadow o'er your smile.
I would that presently, when I
Shall make the final trip,
The old-time cheer should light your eye
And linger in your grip.

So long we two were wont to ride
On passenger and freight,
But somehow we've been switched aside—
They've passed us by, of late.
And since the fever laid me low
I've counted every run,
And thought of all the hardships, Joe,
And likewise all the fun.

I heard again the engine's shriek,
The sudden crash and shock;
I heard the coaches grind and creak,
I felt them reel and rock.
'Twas just beyond the horseshoe bend,
A landslide caused the wreck—
You found me just in time, old friend,
And saved my worthless neck.

A thousand mem'ries, grave and gay,
Came slowly trooping back:
And some shone brightly by the way,
Like sunshine on the track.
The shifting lights and shadows, Joe,
Of days long past and gone;
But for each dying sunset glow
There waits a brighter dawn.

And I've been ordered out once more,
Not on the same old line—
But where the headlight gleams before,
A nobler run is mine.
A strange, new journey through the night;
And somewhere round the bend
Where glows the faith-lit signal light
I'll watch—for you—old friend.

MISSING MEN

Pat McCarty, of the Gibson Hotel, Key West, Florida, sends the following request for information:

H. H. Hargon, often called "Dusty," boomer brakeman, switchman, mudhop, brass pounder, *et cetera*. Was on the I. C. in 1922; P. R. R., 1921; Santa Fe, 1923; Florida East Coast, 1925; Rock Island, 1927. A great guy. Wonderful personality. Heard he was on the S. P. somewhere in the West. Would like to have him communicate with an old rail.

And here's another:

H. Edison.—Was a fireman on the Atlantic Coast Line at Rocky Mount, North Carolina; was transferred to Sanford, Florida, and was last seen in Tampa. Please write your old friend, who was firing a passenger run at that time. Red H., care of this magazine.

NOW THE COUPON

Again this month we reprint our coupon. This makes the third in a row. If you have coupons from the December number, the January number and from this one and will fill them in with your likes and dislikes and send them to us, you may name your choice of an original drawing which has appeared in this magazine. You had better name two or perhaps three drawings that you would like to have in the event that your first choice is not available.

"HERE'S MY VOTE"

Editor,
RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE,
280 Broadway, N. Y. C., N. Y.

The stories I like best in this issue of the magazine are as follows:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

I did not like.....

because.....

Name.....

Street.....

City.....*State*.....

[2]

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

The Purpose of this Department is to put the reader in touch immediately with the newest needfuls for the HOME, OFFICE, FARM, or PERSON; to offer, or seek, an unusual BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY, or to suggest a service that may be performed satisfactorily through correspondence. It will pay a housewife or business man equally well to read these advertisements carefully.

RATE—$1.50 per Line

HELP WANTED—MALE

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN (WHITE OR COLORED). SLEEPING CAR, TRAIN PORTERS (COLORED). $150—$250 MONTHLY. EXPERIENCE UNNECESSARY. 305 RAILWAY BUREAU, EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.

FEBRUARY FIRST!

"Want Him Alive?"

By W. Wirt

A thrilling novelette. Three of Uncle Sam's hush-hush operators trail a killer into the deadly labyrinths of Okefenokee swamp.

"The Subway Murder"

By Madeleine Sharps Buchanan

The body of a plainly dressed woman in a white tiled subway exit! It didn't look like much of a mystery until Inspector Ransom noticed that her fingernails were carefully manicured. Then a poor salesman and a philanthropist each report their wives missing from home! The author of "White Scars" and "The Red Yacht Sails" has a new puzzler that will thrill you.

Beginning in the February 8th issue

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

(FORMERLY FLYNN'S)

Ten Cents at all Newsstands

You cannot allow ten cents to stand between you and this interesting magazine.

Don't let a Cold or Sore Throat become serious

—*gargle with Listerine full strength*

Kills germs in 15 seconds

SORE throat is a warning to look out for a cold —or worse.

If you have the slightest indication of trouble, gargle immediately with full strength Listerine. Keep it up.

Millions have found that this simple act checks the ordinary kind of sore throat promptly. Keeps it from becoming serious. Moreover, they have proved that its systematic use is excellent protection against having colds and sore throat at all.

When you realize that full strength Listerine kills even the virulent Bacillus Typhosus (typhoid) and Staphylococcus Aureus (pus) germs in numbers ranging to 200,000,000 in 15 seconds, you can understand why it is so effective against cold weather complaints which are caused by germs breeding in the mouth.

Though Listerine is powerful you may use it full strength with entire safety in any cavity of the body. Indeed, it is actually soothing and healing to tissue. This is commented on by the famous "Lancet," the leading medical publication of the world.

Keep a bottle of Listerine handy and use it frequently—especially after exposure to cold weather or germ-carrying crowds in offices, railway trains, street cars or buses. It may spare you a trying and costly siege of illness. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

To escape a cold—

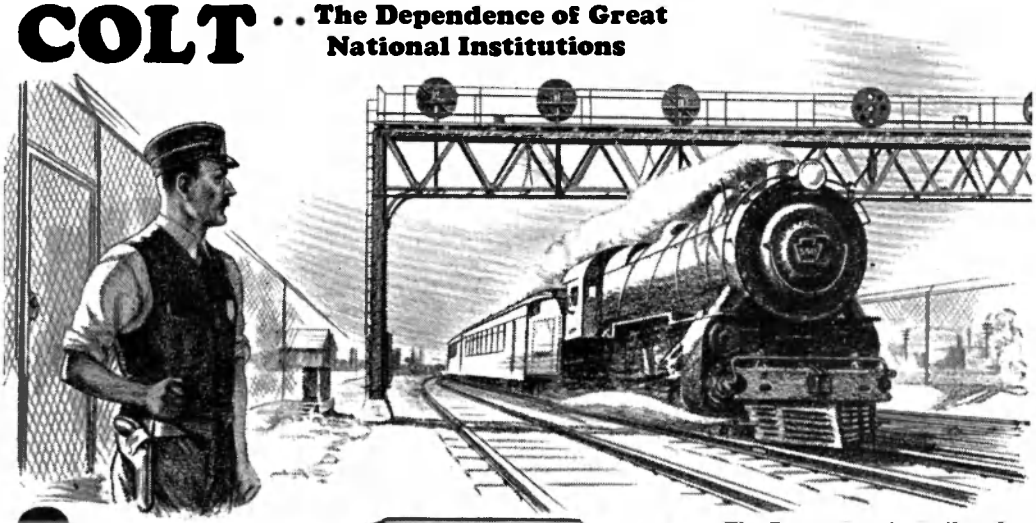
rinse the hands with it

Colds can often be prevented by the use of full strength Listerine on the hands before each meal. It destroys germs which may be present so that when they enter the mouth on food they are powerless to cause harm.

LISTERINE The Safe Antiseptic

Kills 200,000,000 *germs in* 15 *seconds*

COLT . . The Dependence of Great National Institutions



The Pennsylvania Railroad includes COLTS among the modern safety devices used throughout its system

. . not "just a fire arm" but a COLT

YOU cannot afford to be less particular in the choice of your fire arms than those public institutions, the very essence of whose service is SAFETY.

For 94 years Colt's has continually devised new tests of materials, workmanship and performance, until, to produce the Arm illustrated —the Colt Official Police, .38 Cal. Revolver — entails 564 machine and 124 hand operations and 322 visual and gauge inspections—1010 separate steps in all. These tests begin before the steels are forged into shape and end only after the finished Colt has been targeted by an expert marksman.

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Let Colt's Service Department aid you in selecting the Arm best suited to your needs; in solving your shooting problems and in organizing a local Revolver Club.

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SMALL ARMS DIVISION

HARTFORD, CONN., U. S. A.

Phil. B. Bekeart Co., Pacific Coast Representative, 717 Market St., San Francisco, Calif.

A COLT PRODUCT

. . . *The* ARM OF LAW *and* ORDER

A thief in the night

that robs you of your rest

TROUBLED THROATS

When coughs or colds bring troubled throats to steal your hours of rest, remember that Luden's Menthol Action *gives quick relief.*

In the Yellow Package— 5¢

ONE LUDEN'S AFTER EVERY 10 CIGARETTES IS THE NEW RULE FOR SMOKERS WITH TENDER THROATS.